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given its tradition, aims and practice can be called "scientific astrology": a term calculated to raise the hackles of both the traditional scientist and the traditional astrologer. But it is a activity that has its roots in the early work of Ptolemy, a scientist who in the second century AD produced both the *Almagest*, the definitive work of classical astronomy, and the

Science, even in its most restricted form, demands more than a collection of statistics; there must be a cause. Where is the theoretical element in this strange correlation? Clearly the gravitational influence of the planets can have no measurable effect. What is the scientific agent by which the planets manifest their influence? The Gauguins are aware of the need for such a cause and attempt to supply at least a plausible line of attack. They

call attention to current work in science on the influence of weak magnetic fields on biological systems. Laboratory experiments have shown that very weak fields produce responses in organisms which do not respond to strong magnetic fields. The latter, it appears, overwhelm the control mechanism while the former are more effective because they are subtle. Now, argue the Gaeuquins, is it not possible that the influence of the weak magnetic fields associated with the planets or even the modulation by the planets of the stronger magnetic field of the sun can be effective here on Earth?

The theoretical problem is greater than simply finding an agent to transmit the effect. The results must be consistent with the existing body of scientific knowledge, and the basic claim of traditional astrology fails that test. We know that the most important logical and dependable variable available at birth for predicting the future success or failure of an individual is her or his genetic stockpile. If an individual is to be an Olympic champion, then the genetic heritage must provide the potential for a big strong body and a determined personality. No weak magnetic field could ever compensate for that deficiency. And here the Gaeuquins agree. But they claim that that is consistent with what their research indicates. One must look carefully at the results. Is it not possible, they ask, that for centuries the astrological claims had reversed cause and effect? Perhaps it is not the moment of birth that selects the future but rather the future that selects the moment of birth. If the future is read as the genetic potential, then all one must do, the Gaeuquins suggest, is to add to that genetic stockpile a receptor of weak magnetic influence that will induce labour. Thus the appearance of Mars over the horizon will produce labour in statistically meaningful numbers for those with genetic backgrounds capable of producing outstanding athletes. Therefore, there would be an astrological effect but it would be the inverse of what has long been claimed. Seen in this way, the cause and effect would be consistent with what modern science holds. In defence of their argument, they point out that the effect disappears for births that have labour induced by other means.

It is this convoluted controversy of physics and metaphysics, of claims and counterclaims, and of science and superstition that Eysenck and Nias enter with balance in hand. In a careful and thorough manner, they collect and evaluate the evidence. The claims of astrology are the focus of roughly two-thirds of the book and are found to be universally wanting. Concerning the ability to predict personality and destiny, they conclude, "Whenever a properly scientific test has been carried out on a large enough sample and reported in enough detail for its validity to be judged, and has then been replicated, it fails to support the beliefs of traditional astrology."

Concerning the Gaeuquins' findings, however, Eysenck and Nias are supportive. They raise questions concerning the causal explanation but conclude that "we can find no valid major criticism of their conclusion, methods, or statistics. If there is any value in the scientific method as usually employed in studies of this kind... [then] there are certain facts urgently in need of a good hypothesis to explain them."

Concerning the attitude of scientists towards this new body of knowledge, Eysenck and Nias are dismayed. They find the scientific attitude more in the climate of the inquisition, not of factuality, unbiased inquiry; many of the people in the scientific establishment would have fitted well into the past which condemned Galileo. We have become aware of this climate of censorship and intolerance, both through reports from individuals directly affected and from remarks warning us that even criticizing astrology in detail, and showing familiarity with its pronouncements, would undermine our scientific standing and reputation. So much for the religion of the open mind.

In contrast to the scholarly and rigorous approach of H. J. Eysenck and D. K. Nias, there stands the

more popular work by Martin Seymour-Smith entitled *The New Astrologer*. Its dust-jacket loudly proclaims, "Here at last, is the comprehensive guide to astrology." Employing it, we are told, "anyone can learn and practise astrology without buying more books". It purports to do three things: first, to analyse "what astrology can do - the evidence that it works" and "what astrology cannot do - the superstitions and errors still widely believed"; second, to present a "brief but reasonably comprehensive history of the important parts of astrology"; and finally, in what is referred to as the "core" of the work, to offer detailed and practical instruction on how to construct and interpret birth charts.

Seymour-Smith is aware of the controversy addressed by Eysenck and Nias and he discusses the Gaeuquins and other important contributors. His own position on the issue of astrology as a science, however, is somewhat less than clear. He begins with a rather safe disclaimer: "It is doubtless best for any astrologer to admit that he has not the least idea how it [astrology] works." Nevertheless, he appears to accept the position of astrology as a science when he states on the following page, "It does seem most likely, though we can't prove it, that astrological effect is obtained by a complex of resonances, probably of an electro-magnetic nature." He eventually puts this scientific view aside and adopts the artistic approach: "I do not believe that straightforward scientific cause and effect applies to astrology." Yet he concludes that "the judgment of any fair-minded person must now be that there are astrological effects."

The historical review contains two pages of commentary on E. R. Dodds' commentary on the Stoic attitude towards astrology and a discussion of similar leath on the attitude towards astrology of Augustine (against) Thomas Aquinas (for) and Giordano Bruno (muddled). Otherwise, it is a collection of short commentaries on historical figures that are often incorrect or confused.

On Kepler: he "introduced" new aspects based on the division of the circle by five. Kepler did introduce three new aspects and two of them were related to the circle and to the ratios of 3:5 and 4:5. They arose, however, from considerations of musical theory and the division by five is a secondary not a primary consideration.

On Newton: "the mechanical universe postulated by Newton led to a collapse of serious astrology in the eighteenth century. Newton himself did not approve of this, for he had originally begun his scientific studies in order to test astrology." The claim that Newton supported astrology has no basis in historical fact. There is nothing in his collected works, published or private, that sustains such a claim. Moreover, forty years ago the Newton scholar I. Bernard Cohen published a request in a leading journal of the history of science requesting any information bearing on such claims. None was forthcoming.

On Einstein: "who, though no believer, or adherent of a pseudo-religious system, was prompted by his investigations to make it clear that he could not be sure". This statement is offered by Seymour-Smith as a refutation for those who would reject "non-mechanical" explanations. It assumes, in some simplistic way, that Einstein is making nothing is "sure". Einstein's statement is "true" but the basis in fact is that the laws of physics are co-variant and that our conception of the world must adapt to this conviction.

The final goal of the book, however, is the "practical" one of offering detailed instruction on how to construct and interpret birth charts. This Seymour-Smith does with great gusto. The astronomical bases of astrology are explored, birth charts are constructed and analysed and in turn the analytical factors are evaluated. Examples are given and tables of planetary positions for 1900-2000 are listed. Everything necessary for the self-made astrologer is there. Offering, as the author suggests, "the basis of an intelligent parlour game, or a quest for self-knowledge". The author clearly holds for the second option, but unless the reader already shares with him the conviction that astrology "works", it is unlikely that this book will convince anyone of its validity.

When he returned to London, HPS did not admit him to her own Esoteric

In the service of the Masters

Arthur Calder-Marshall

GREGORY TILLET

The Elder Brother: A biography of Charles Webster Leadbeater
337pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.
£12.50.
0 7100 0926 7

A week in 1884 changed the life of the Assistant Stipendiary Curate of Bramshott, Hants. Bored by everybody in his parish, except the boys, the Revd C. W. Leadbeater had taken up first spiritualism and then theosophy. He had managed to join the TS (Theosophical Society) London Lodge, despite the Tibetan Masters' disapproval of clergymen, and on October 30, he visited London to say goodbye to HPS (Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky), co-founder of the TS, who was leaving next evening for the World Headquarters at Adyar, near Madras. Imagine his joy when she told him that the Tibetan Master Koot Hoomi had answered the letter for which he had been awaiting a reply since spring. Next morning the letter arrived from Bramshott. If Leadbeater was willing to atone for the sins of Christian missionaries conspiring against the Society, he must go to Adyar for a few months.

He rushed to London, to ask HPS to relay a reply to K.H. He wanted to give up his career in the Church and devote himself to the Masters' service. But it would take some three months to settle his affairs. HPS (or Upasika as she was known by the Masters) told Leadbeater not to leave her for a moment. That afternoon, as she was rolling a cigarette in the drawing-room of a Mrs Cooper-Oakley, her hand jerked strangely and a small mass of whitish mud formed on her palm, then materialized as a faded note, which handed it to Leadbeater and told him to leave the room, read the contents and reveal them to no one. "... go to Adyar immediately. ... Do not lose one day more than you can help. Sail on the 5th if possible. Join Upasika at Alexandria." Obeyingly Leadbeater left London on November 4 to catch the SS Brynmantle, sailing from Marseilles to Alexandria.

Gregory Tillet, with the aid of a Commonwealth Postgraduate Research Award has spent twelve years pursuing Leadbeater, myth and man, over four continents, points out the coincidence that the message from the Tibetan Master should have been posted in Kato's letter, close to HPS's residence, but leaves the reader to conjecture what made the thirty-year-old curate so ungraciously abandon the cure presented him by his maternal uncle, Canon Capes, Rector of Bramshott. My theory is that he was hypnotized by HPS.

This would explain what followed. Leadbeater's immediate departure was required, because HPS wanted to produce a theosophical paragon to refute the Christian enemies in India who denounced her messages from the Masters as fraudulent and her theosophy as anti-Christian. In a railway train in Egypt, Leadbeater witnessed the precipitation of a letter from Koot Hoomi, signed HPS. "I tell Leadbeater I am satisfied with his zeal and devotion." In her Cairo bedroom, she introduced Leadbeater to a figure called the Master Djwal Kuhl (DK). "A nice occultist," she exclaimed, "You will not go far on the path of occultism if you are so easily startled at a little thing like that." Unless hypnotized, Leadbeater would surely not have carried a full chamber-pot round the deck of a liner, ignoring fellow-passengers, as he was persuaded that his becoming a Buddhist was not a violation of his Christian vows.

He spent five years in India and Ceylon, becoming so indoctrinated by HPS and her colleagues Colonel Olcott in the service of the Masters that he felt their presence even without hypnosis or trickery. The practice of Kumbh Mela enabled him "to use astral sight while still retaining full consciousness of the physical body". He convinced himself, and others less gifted or glib, that he possessed clairvoyant powers.

When he returned to London, HPS did not admit him to her own Esoteric

Section of the TS. His messages from the Masters did not tally with hers; perhaps to remind him of the chamber-pot, she never called him C. W. Leadbeater, always W.C. But A. P. Sinnett of the London Lodge, who did not pretend to be clairvoyant, used him as a medium for contacting Koot Hoomi, who only used written messages through HPS. Leadbeater was a small, and hungry, fish in the Esoteric pond, until HPS died and Annie Besant took over her Esoteric Section.

Mrs Besant had brains, looks, vim and charisma. Having left her mingly parsonical husband, she had already become famous, preaching atheism and defending birth-control with Bradlaugh, organizing the Match Girl strike and backing Hyndman's revolutionary socialism, then joining GBS in the Fabian Society. Reading Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled* opened her eyes to the potentialities of Theosophical Brotherhood. But she lacked clairvoyance; and that she found with Leadbeater, who with her encouragement explored time, space and the atom. He traced past lives of TS members through history to prehistoric Atlantis and Lemuria. How interlinked their lives had been! Before earth-life, he and Annie had served the Masters in monkey form on the moon. In 40,000 BC, Annie had been his husband and their children included Krishnamurti and his brother Nitya. Ten thousand years later she married the daughter of Leadbeater and Nitya. Leadbeater's enemies were his villainous roles back to Lemuria; and new members were awarded pasts, like occult coats-of-arms.

Leadbeater taught Mrs Besant to see with her etheric eye without losing consciousness. Together, or separately, they dictated their findings to a secretary. They invented "Occult Chemistry". Hydrogen was made of "six main bodies, contained in an egg-like form. It rotated with great rapidity on its own axis, vibrating at the same time and the internal bodies performed similar gyrations". These revelations provoked less credulous theosophists to denounce "Esoteric Bogeysdom". Tillet appears commonsensically sceptical in the main body of his biography, but in his last chapter he wonders if Leadbeater and Mrs Besant "discovered the quirk nearly seventy years before science suspected its existence".

Less dubious is Tillet's uncovering of Leadbeater's early life. Charles Webster Leadbeater was born in Thompson Street, Stockport on February 16, 1854, son of a book-keeper or clerk, and Emma (née Morgan, the daughter of a builder). In 1862, his father, aged thirty-six, died of TB. His mother's sister had married William Wolf Capes. Capes took holy orders in 1868, became Rector of Bramshott, but spent little time there because he was also Fellow and Tutor at The Queen's College and later Hertford College, Oxford. Capes was wealthy, and older residents of Bramshott "all refer to large areas of Bramshott as 'Canon Capes' land". Tillet suggests that Capes offered his widowed sister-in-law a cottage in Bramshott. What is certain is that in 1897 Leadbeater, aged twenty-five, was ordained deacon by the Bishop of Winchester and licensed as Assistant Stipendiary Curate in the parish of Bramshott with a salary of £120 p.a. He lived with his mother in a cottage built by Capes in 1861. He was described as "literate", i.e. not a graduate of Oxford, Cambridge, Durham or Dublin.

During the eighty years of his life, Leadbeater improved on these humble origins. He changed his birthdate to February 17 to make it treble significant to Theosophists: Col Olcott having died, and Giordano Bruno - a previous incarnation of Mrs Besant - having been born on that date. He backdated the year to 1847, the year of the dedication of St Andrew's School children (at Bramshott?). His father, prompted to railway director, took Charles, his mother and a younger brother Gerald to wild Brazil.

Twelve-year-old Charles drove a locomotive at great speed to capture an approaching railway clerk. On a trip

into the interior, Leadbeater père took Charles and Gerald with him:

After surviving an attack by Indians, sufficiently threatening to inspire their father to make a long-winded speech about the meaning of life... they were captured by rebels. The leader of the rebel army, General Martinez, demanded they join his army, or be executed. Leadbeater's father indignantly refused, asserting over and over again that "as an Englishman" he declined to take part in such affairs. The rebels were unimpressed with the typically Leadbeaterian display of patriotism, and prepared to administer an oath of allegiance. Part of the oath (for reasons never explained) included tramping on a crucifix. Leadbeater's father, having managed to free himself from the ropes which tied his hands and feet, made a sudden dash into the jungle and disappeared, much to the annoyance of the rebels, and much to the amusement, oddly enough, of Charles and Gerald. Martinez ordered Gerald to trample on the crucifix, but Gerald exhorted him not to do so: "Don't do it, Gerald. I shouted back to him as I was dragged off: remember St Agnes". And Gerald, doubtless recalling the courageous thirteen-year-old Roman maiden, refused to obey and told Martinez that he was "a very wicked man", whereupon the rebel leader killed the child with his sword.

Charles was of course rescued, assisted by the ghost of Gerald, and went on to many adventures before the villain came to their sticky ends: as revealed in *Saved by a Ghost: A True Record of Adventure in Brazil*, inspired less by Koot Hoomi than by G. A. Henry.

The importance of his non-existent brother Gerald lay in the fact that in 1888 Leadbeater picked up a Sinhalese boy called Jinarajadasa who became his constant companion. Suppliants of pederasty could be allowed by Leadbeater's revelation that the boy was really a reincarnation of brother Gerald, butchered in Brazil. Nevertheless, charges were made in 1906 that two boys, entrusted to his care, were taken to bed by Leadbeater and taught to masturbate, under the guise of occult training. Leadbeater was forced to resign from the TS and only restored to favour when Col Olcott on his deathbed begged him, on the prompting of Mahatmas M and K.H. to stop teaching young boys to masturbate, so that he could rejoin the TS. On Mrs Besant's succeeding to the Presidency, Leadbeater promised to abandon the teaching, was restored to favour but continued to sleep naked in bed with favorite boys, even though Aleister Crowley publicly denounced him as "a senile Sodomite".

Leadbeater's resilience was astonishing. It was he who discovered Krishnamurti as the vehicle in which the Lord Maitreya should manifest himself, as he had last done in Jesus. Yet when Krishnamurti, on achieving maturity, repudiated Leadbeater, Annie Besant and their senior common-room of Masters, Leadbeater carried on regardless, becoming Presiding Bishop of the Liberal Catholic Church, Administrator General of the Co-Masonic Order in Australia, President of the TS, centre of the Lotus Circle, master of the Servants of the Star, Senior Knight of the Order of the Round Virgins of Java. Today, forty-eight years after his death, some people still regard him as "the world's greatest clairvoyant and occultist", "a living saint", and others, who have never heard his name, use his jargon as small change in occult currency. "There is no doubt at all," writes Tillet, "that Leadbeater was gifted with a degree of psychic perception which enabled him to see things which were beyond the normal range of the senses."

I guess that, beginning as HPS's dupe, he ended by duping others, including himself.

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The soldier in retreat

Andrew Motion

EDMUND BLUNDEN

Selected Poems
Edited by Robyn Marsack
107pp. Carcanet. £4.95.
0 85353 425 2

In the last sentence of *Undertones of War* Edmund Blunden famously describes himself as "a harmless young shepherd in a soldier's coat". It is a misleadingly humble judgment. At first glance it seems simple to suggest a shepherd as the most appropriate metaphor for the poet. But as the evidence of the book indicates, Blunden's vulnerability is in fact his strength. He not only grieves for the passing of a stable pastoral world; he self-consciously marshals his tropes and metaphors into a challenge. He makes the past live, in order that it should comfort and control his memories of France. His retreat is a kind of attack.

The same is true of his poems - or of the earlier ones, at least. If their

purpose is to be appreciated, the archaism for which they are often blamed has to be seen not as a reprehensible survival of Georgianism, but as a radical conservatism. Robyn Marsack's judicious new selection helps us to understand this. Although her choice represents the whole of Blunden's career, it concentrates mainly on the war poems and allows us to watch Blunden developing his particular brand of Arcadianism. Often the poems follow the lead given by the titles of his first three collections - *The Waggoner*, *The Shepherd*, *To Nature*: they persistently contain their traces of barbarism within the forms and observations of peace. And when Blunden tackles war openly, as in "Third Ypres: A Reminiscence", we are reminded of sources of perennial comfort even as we watch them being abused. The poem, like several of Wilfred Owen's, provides a series of ironic reversals which measure the unnaturalness of war by recalling the usual associations of nature itself:

The slow moments shake their heavy heads,

And croak, "They're done, they'll none of them get through."
They're done, they've all died on the entanglements,
The wire stood up like an unplashed hedge, and thorned
With giant spikes - and there they've paid the bill.

In support of such implicit preservations, Blunden candidly allied himself to a specific literary tradition. As Ms Marsack says in her Introduction, he "likened owing to poetic ancestors" - and even if there were not his literary essays and biographies to bear her out, the poems would be sufficient proof. They bristle with allusions to earlier writers whose work clarified the values that he admired. This is often a matter of direct borrowing - from Collins, Blake, Keats and Coleridge, especially - but it is also obvious in more general terms. Virtually every poem which examines minute particulars of rural life recalls the deliberate, close-up, attentive sympathy of Clare. The way of looking is a way of trying to establish a continuity between their cruelly interrupted worlds.

These ulterior motives in Blunden's poems explain his own unambiguously expressed opinion that he is not merely a "nature writer". In the Preface to the *Poems* (1930) he said: "Great as is the power of country life over me, and of that stately march of the seasons... yet I have always suspected myself of some inclination to explore other subjects." For a long time, the question most frequently raised about Blunden's poems has been whether or not these "other subjects" were ever allowed a look in. Demonstrating the tactics of his pastoralism indicates that they do. But this justification leaves another question unanswered. Did the means by which Blunden assimilated his war experience become too knowing, too thorough, to prevent him from making the most of his undoubtedly intense feelings? Shortly before his death, he admitted "My experiences in the First World War have haunted me all my life and for many days I have, it seemed, lived in that world rather than this."

But as the war receded into memory, the ways he dealt with its hauntings became increasingly axiomatic and unsurprising. The style which evolved as an affirmation was increasingly vulnerable to charges of regression.

The problem seems to stem chiefly from the extent to which Blunden internalized his most horrific memories. At the end of "Third Ypres" he asks "who with what command can now relieve / The dead men from that chaos, or my soul?" - and in later years the certainty that the chaos within himself was undiminished made him hesitate to look at it very closely. What he often gives in his poems is not so much self-investigation as self-revelation. Clearly this is likely to (and frequently does) produce the omissions and absolute suppressions of very minor art. But on a few occasions it prompts him to re-create his feelings in interestingly cryptic and symbolic

terms. "The Midnight Skaters" is a celebrated instance. The "crystal parapet" of ice between the skaters and the "pond's black bed" simultaneously admits and withholds the threats "at watch / Within those secret waters." In a number of other poems the same use is made of water to suggest the depths and dangers of his "soul" - let alone his subconscious. In "Perch-Fishing" his catch fills him more with sorrow for the fish's surviving man than with pleasure at his own success; in "The Canal" the water is choked with *memento mori*; in "Water Moment" an eel and its victim fight to the death; and in "The Pike" a miller is "amazed at the whirl in the water" as the pike gobbles up a chub. The most peculiar example of the same anxiety occurs in "The Dream" where, during a nightmarish description of fishing, images of self-emasculation issue in a revolting morbidity:

On the bleak bank lay
A carcass effigy in clay,
A trunk of vague and lifeless mass
As might lie beneath filmed glass.
Where on the pane the buzzing fly
Batters to win the desperate sky.

The point of these poems is disturbingly clear: when Blunden fished too deeply in himself he caught death - the imminence of his own, sometimes, but more often the harrowing memory of those of friends and contemporaries during the war. Their potency explains why he tried to avoid looking too directly, or for too long, into himself - but what must have made his poems less rewarding to read. When he denies his neuroses too completely, or rehearses his Arcadian strategies too reflexively, he is left looking simply anachronistic. Whether he liked it or not, surviving the war meant enduring into the modern age, and for a great deal of the latter part of his life, his fight against it was a losing battle.

July Books

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Differing and deferring

John Sturrock

CHRISTOPHER NORRIS

Deconstruction: Theory and Practice
157pp. Methuen. £6.50 (paperback).
0416320600

T. K. SEUNG

Structuralism and Hermeneutics
310pp. Columbia University Press.
£29.75
0231052782

Deconstruction is sworn to purge our minds of "the metaphysics of presence", or of that sentimental presumption we hold fast to as readers that the meanings of what we read are certified by the presence behind the mere words of a transcendent Someone of whom the text is an authoritative emanation. The Derridians would do away with such redundant phantasies and deny any beyond to the text, which, they say, has been cut everlastingly adrift from its human source by its commitment to writing and to the public domain. Given which, Deconstruction should be (re-)opening the way to a style of literary criticism in which authorship plays no part and where proper names are discounted: a criticism in which ideas are advanced and tested free from anxieties over proprietorship. Yet it is not working out like that; to date Deconstruction has been conducted all too theatrically in the names of a few star professors, who have shown no sign at all of wishing on themselves a solemn dissolution in favour of their texts.

Thus the index to Christopher Norris's very competent and energetic little book contains some 120 proper names as well as such giveaway entities as "Allegory: Paul de Man on..." or "belatedness (Blemond)", which is going too far in the subordination of ideas to their temporary embodiments. What *Deconstruction* testifies to before all else is the "presence" of Jacques Derrida, who gets a whole column to himself in the index. In a short book, Norris mixes with much skill the exposition of Derrida's teachings with an account of their success in the United States, and chiefly at Yale. Here a map would have helped, to show that the Derridan faithful have multiplied most effectively in those centres of learning that he has visited in person: the locus of his greatest

influence might coincide quite precisely with his academic itinerary.

Norris summarizes neatly and confidently the principal arguments which Derrida has promulgated in fifteen years of high productivity. He fits Deconstruction into a narrative of critical movements in which it functions as the dénouement, as an outcome, first, of the New Criticism and then of Structuralism. Norris assumes, in the interests of progress, that Structuralism has had its day, even though he should have admitted that there are a great many literary and academic circles, both here and in the United States, where it has yet to arrive. But rather than Structuralism as such, he singles out as the episode he requires for his story the work of Jonathan Culler. His reasons are polemical; though he is generally noncommittal about where he stands himself, Norris does have an ideological row to hoe. He is a friend of the new and the subversive in criticism, and takes Culler as his token Structuralist because Culler has watered Structuralism down and entered into a compromise with the humanism of the New Critics. Norris is looking for more virile attitudes than this. His own admiration goes to the Genghis Khan school of Deconstructionists, of whom he writes: "The claims of analysis have never been pressed so far as by conceptual rhetoricians like de Man. Nor has criticism ever taken on such courage, intellectual or stylistic, in asserting its claim as a self-respecting discipline of thought."

It is the flamboyance and assertiveness of Deconstructionists which seem in the end to weigh more with Norris than the well-foundedness of the case for Deconstruction, and this is a pity, seeing how good he is at the elucidation of arguments as refined and difficult as many of Derrida's. Anyone reading *Deconstruction* will be helped greatly to follow the logic of Derrida's work. That logic asks really that we drop the word Deconstruction and talk rather of Post-structuralism, since only by grasping its relations with Structuralism do we have a chance of seeing the full point of Deconstruction. If there is a key exercise in practical deconstruction it is Derrida's lengthy and masterly unpeeling of Saussure in *De la grammatologie*, in which he uses Saussure's own insights into the differential nature of language, to

reveal inconsistencies in his position. Derrida's case is that Saussure, true to the western way of thought, clung to an essentialist, metaphysical view of meaning, as something that was "expressed" by the word, i.e. as something independent of and prior to its material manifestation. In this view meaning is an entity, fully present in the moment of its emission. But such a view does not square with Saussure's deeper view of language as a system of interdependent, labile forms, in which there can be no fully present entities at all. If Derrida is, right, post-Structuralism is the true Structuralism, the one which Saussure should have given us and would have done, had he not been one more victim of our western metaphysical illusion.

Norris gives estimable short accounts of Derrida's deconstructions of Saussure, Rousseau and Husserl, and does well to bring out the new status of Nietzsche as the heroic precursor of Deconstruction, the philosopher who joyed in the inescapable rhetoricalness of natural language. Joy through rhetoric is by now the war-cry of the deconstructionists, even if none of them as yet has learnt to write with the force and profundity of Nietzsche himself. Norris backs the view that the ebullient self-awareness and high literary ambition of such critics as Paul de Man have elevated them into those grander regions previously reserved for the "philosophers". But he might have defined the sort of "philosophers" he had in mind. Seers and aphorists such as Nietzsche have usually been consigned to literature by Anglo-American philosophers, in order to mark them off from the sober and professional legions of empiricists.

The deconstructionists are claiming too much for themselves. "It now becomes possible to argue - indeed impossible to deny - that literary texts are less deluded than the discourse of philosophy, precisely because they implicitly acknowledge and exploit their own rhetorical status." I don't know what unprecedented form of words might be construed as an "implicit" acknowledgment, when acknowledgments are explicit or nothing, but Norris's whole proposition is any way fanciful. To take it seriously would be to conclude that the end of Deconstruction will be megalomania and a total severance of language from its referential uses.

Better to be deluded with the philosophy than cozened by the knowing wordplay of the rhetoricians. Such presumptions, however, are no necessary part of Deconstruction, but have to do with the personality cult that it should now be separated from. I wish Norris had done more to play down the spectacular side of the movement.

There are many fewer names, and fewer concessions to spectacle, in *Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, in which a Texan philosopher, T. K. Seung, traces the evolution in contemporary thought from the untenable objectivism of the Structuralists to the untenable subjectivism of the post-Structuralists. Structuralism he finds fault with for its ignoring of history and context, and its mistaken pursuit of supposed universal truths; post-Structuralism for its relapse into an extreme and debilitating relativism, unconstrained by any recognition that there are constants as well as variables in the texts with which it engages. Seung's own preference is for the German tradition of "historical objectivism", which strives to recover the true meaning of texts by prolonged attention to their historical context.

Seung is a patient and forthright critic of philosophical and other arguments. He is especially keen when he identifies the paradoxes in positions such as Derrida's, asking whether it is possible to philosophize at all if the theoretical terms you employ in doing so lack any ideal content common to each and every occurrence. Is it possible, that is, for Derrida's meta-language to be as playful as the object-languages on which he exercises it, without destroying whatever validity could be claimed for it? Here Seung surely points the finger at the deconstructionists' most dishonest argument, which is that their own texts are as self-destructing as those they study. Norris tries to cover them against this charge by asserting that a Derridan term such as *différance* has no "single, self-identical meaning" but rather oscillates between a sense of "deferring" and a sense of "deferring".

As I understand him, he is proposing that *différance* thus evokes the deferral of meaning and the "undecidability" so crucial to Derrida's thought, and that the meaning of the term is never fully present in a single occurrence of it. Yet I would say that *différance* means "deferral" and functions in the same,

familiar way that other words do, contrary to Norris's implication that it is the master-word to which all other words should be seen, functionally, as conforming.

Seung's book is a commentary well worth having on a range of Structuralist and post-Structuralist theses. He spends too long, for sure, battering down one door I had thought already unhinged; when he exposes the pretensions and failures of Lévi-Strauss and Jakobson's dire analysis of Baudelaire's sonnet, "Les châtiments", Nor is Seung convincing when he complains against Roland Barthes as a semiotician that Barthes was wrong to believe that everything in a given culture has been semantized, or can be regarded as participating in "sign systems" by virtue of their conventionally established meanings. Turkey dinners have a meaning, it seems, chicken dinners don't - in Texas, that is. This is unfair to chickens, which should not have their connotations removed so brutally. Seung writes as if the semiotics of food were somehow complete before it had been begun. To a Texan, chicken dinners may be less obviously meaningful than turkey dinners, but how could they fail to have some conventional meaning? For a start, chicken dinners are not turkey dinners, which could mean quite a lot if they were eaten at Thanksgiving.

At the end of *Structuralism and Hermeneutics* Seung hits - fittingly, given the high importance accorded to the post-Structuralist in his book - on a most intriguing metaphor, when he invokes what he calls the "nirvana" to which Derridians aspire, as that ideal state in which all differentiation has ceased and where language is "finally released from the verbal karma of reference and representation." I think he is on to something here. French thought of the past twenty years offers convergent evidence of just such Buddhist leanings, in Lévi-Strauss, in Barthes (in his love affair with Japan and with Zen) and, if darkly, in Derrida, working to subvert the oppositions by which we in the West traditionally order our thoughts. It is as if, after the strains and excitements of the many, dialectical years, the search is on for a serene haven where the mind can daily in post-differential bliss.

some rather tedious repetitiveness between the different essays.

Nevertheless, any student of the history of thought in England, France and Germany, from the seventeenth to the early twentieth century, will find much to ponder on and wonder at in this work. The important rôle of theories about language in social, intellectual and cultural history is given the prominence it deserves, even though more technical approaches to linguistic structure receive short shrift.

Particularly telling is Aarsleff's account of the way Locke's views were distorted by his nineteenth-century detractors (and, hence, by Chomsky), as well as his convincing rejection of the simplistic empiricist/rationalist dichotomy in relation to language study. Here Aarsleff's approach resists dividends, and we are shown how contemporary institutionalized prejudices serve to blinker readers of earlier works. If it is, on the other hand, his sound historical scholarship that underlines the close connection between interest in the origin of language and universal grammar.

Aarsleff is perhaps on less familiar ground in describing the influences on Saussure by his predecessors in France. As an well versed in the Romantic tradition of German linguistic scholarship, that the linguistic sign and the social status of language, already, foreshadowed Saussure's theories, comes as a surprise to those nurtured by the

classic 1936 *Introduction to Romance Linguistics* by Iorgu Iordan and John Orr (which I had the privilege of updating in 1970). Indeed, in a long footnote contributed by John Orr (p. 294), the parallels in Saussure's and Bréal's thought are discussed, with the suggestion that Saussure focused a number of ideas that were "common property" among scholars of the time.

Perhaps Aarsleff's cautious reliance on documentary evidence does not allow enough scope for the rôle of oral transmission in the communication of ideas from one generation to the next. The predilection within Romance linguistics for "idealism", culture-related language study, at the expense of narrow technical linguistics, may plausibly owe much to a well consensus that goes back to Condillac and his fellows.

Moreover, Aarsleff does not stress enough the way that the French "school", as represented by Bréal, aimed at amalgamating the aims and methods of "scientific" linguistics with study of languages as social communication and as the expression of thought. Nevertheless, even though these essays underestimate the real achievements of the former approach, they deserve a wide audience for their excellent account of the latter.

Bertrand Russell's *A Bibliography of his Writings 1895-1970*, compiled by Werner Martin, has recently been published (332pp. Munich: Saur, £15.35/£10.48 4. UK distribution: Library Association: Publishing, 7 Ridgmount Street, London WC1).

The bastion of the bourgeoisie

Roy Foster

R. B. McDOWELL and D. A. WEBB
Trinity College Dublin 1592-1952: An Academic History
580pp. Cambridge University Press.
£35.
0521 239311

Any Irishman knows instinctively what Trinity College represents, but most would be hard put to define it. It used to be seen as an outpost of West Britonism (and it was in this context that the last notable town-and-gown disturbances were conducted in 1945, with promiscuous burning of tricolours and Union Jacks after VE Day); the influx of British students after the war superficially reinforced the impression. But it was never "English" as uneasy incursions in Dublin found Archbishop Whately's definition of the Irish question as the problem attendant upon a quick-witted race being ruled by a slow-witted one being characteristically "Trinity" remark. The fact that it came from a Gold Medalist committed to Toryism, Catholicism, the Erasmus Smith foundation, anti-British values, and flinty pessimism, all of which beliefs were articulated in a Galway brogue, takes us nearer the essence of the institution.

For its curious eclecticism can only be defined in terms of the Trinity mind - one of the constant elements in the organic development of the foundation over four hundred years. This combines a certain intellectual brutality with odd turns of finesse; it is capable of existentialist frivolity as well as gloomy realism; its style is laconic and classical rather than refined and baroque. It takes a real cerebral pleasure in exposing the meretricious and sometimes subordinate intellectual productivity to this important but ephemeral pastime.

Over much to Puritanism - several of its early provosts were leading Puritan intellectuals - and this theme has persisted; the study of divinity has often been interpreted as that of theological controversy. Ulstermen have been disproportionately influential, from Provost Andrews in the eighteenth century to Provost McConnell in the twentieth. It could also be said that another lasting tradition of the Trinity mind is that of John Starne, Professor of Physic in the 1660s, who gallantly attempted to combine the tenets of Stoicism with those of Christianity.

What the present study demonstrates is how the combinations and contradictions of the Trinity mind are reflected in the peculiar nature and even the status of the institution, by name both college and university, with no later foundations (despite recurring nineteenth-century theories) of a unitary body with collegiate and university aspects. Links and comparisons are inevitably made with Oxford and Cambridge, but were early on diffused; a testy footnote dismisses those who have argued for a continuing Oxford influence. Academic developments in the eighteenth century were as haphazard as in England; over-emphasis on Trinity's early appointment of professors in modern languages is put sharply in focus. In a less specific way, however, Trinity's peculiar cultural slant is shown to date from this era.

The disciplined luxury, rational thinking, elegant living and independence of spirit that characterized later Georgian society in Ireland were the qualities which were at that time prized beyond her shores. It had, of course, its seamy side of drunken arrogance and spendthrift eccentricity, but this was more conspicuous in the country than in the capital, where the tolerance of society for such antics had its limits. In Dublin at least there could be seen again, after the lapse of one hundred years, a culture which was distinctively Irish and yet wholly European.

The spirit of the college partook of this. It was, not aristocratic, then or later, even under the great Fely Hutchinson. College society was

"essentially middle-class". In 1830, thirty per cent of the students described their fathers as "gentlemen"; forty per cent were sons of clergy, professional men or army officers, eighteen per cent of tradesmen, eight per cent of farmers, and four per cent of clerks; the practice of awarding non-resident degrees diluted the sense of elitism further. By 1892, some of "gentlemen" had declined to nine per cent. Nor was the political commitment of the college as obtrusive as might be assumed; it was Unionist but not Orange, and always made room for mavericks. Its position in Irish social life, during early nineteenth-century decay as much as eighteenth-century splendour, was local; a recurrent refrain in this study celebrates by thumbnail sketches those Fellows who contributed more to Dublin's entertainment than to Ireland's education. While Trinity did not always deserve her sobriquet of "the silent sister", during certain periods (such as the early eighteenth century and the 1940s) academic productivity was notoriously slack. Nevertheless, the easy sense of superior ability remained, and the characteristic tone of civil arrogance: not long ago, candidates for lectureships who produced *curricula vitae* and copies of their learned articles were caustically referred to by at least one Senior Fellow as "those bloody pamphleteers".

In this at least, the authors of this book are uncharacteristic of their alma mater; both are prolific, and have for long been highly regarded by the academic community outside Ireland. Together, however, they form a fair approximation of a composite Trinity mind. D. A. Webb is an internationally renowned botanist whose breadth of interests include early works on College history; R. B. McDowell has written copiously and originally on Irish and British social and political history in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Their commitment to the college has been lifelong, they have known its life at all levels, and significantly, both have had far more contact with students than is normal for Trinity dons (Webb as Junior Dean - a post which has driven at least one previous incumbent to suicide).

But their joint qualifications go further than this; in combination, the scientists' disconcertingly visceral directness of mind is blended with the shrewd eccentricity of the historian. The result is a history which is stylish,

perceptive, and, where necessary, delectably acidic. The structure is, as promised, resolutely "academic": the life of the college is reflected primarily in two themes. One is constituted by the lives, records and influence on the governing Board of the Provosts and Fellows; the other, by the development and ramifications of the curriculum. This can lead to occasional confusing recurrences and anticipations, while one wishes for the perceptive social generalizations to be pressed further than they often are. Subjects like the record and importance of Trinity Members of Parliament in the nineteenth century are also left tantalizingly to one side; and politics are generally kept resolutely within the walls, which avoids such interesting questions as how far Archbishop Walsh's threat to the college in 1886 was responsible for driving hitherto enlightened Unionists into the Orange spectrum. However, the dangers of a "cataloguing" approach are by and large avoided, by mechanisms like the insertion of a long chapter analyzing the college in 1830, and the lighter tone sustains a performance which, rare among college histories, can be read as narrative as well as reference. Moreover, because of the very nature of the subject, wider issues keep breaking in.

The reason lies partly in the material. Provosts and Fellows pass in an absorbing parade, surveyed by authors who have an ear for a telling anecdote and are not disposed to favourites (Bartholomew Lloyd and George Salmon providing two possible exceptions). Fellows like the brutally reactionary Joseph Carson could love the college "as Pericles loved Athens", in 1880 the affection of the astounding Anthony Traill was demonstrated in another manner when he offered to bribe Provost Lloyd into retirement with his own private income, in return for being himself appointed to the post (over the heads of twenty-five senior colleagues). There are many such byways prospected by the authors with convincing élan; they bring an equally stringent focus to bear on College finances, the much-troubled Trinity estates, and the vagaries of College architecture (where there is matter for regret, beyond the University Press, the Museum Building, and the surprisingly beautiful Front Square). The statistics of students, staff, income and expenditure are handled with clarity and force; some surprising patterns of intake and expansion appear, and the appendices on student numbers and college finances form a condensed

supplement of great value. The nineteenth-century commissions of enquiry which investigated Trinity are seen as demonstrating the college's essential vitality, efficiency and modernism.

Most of all, the curriculum is examined and evaluated in discriminating detail (the fact that Trinity left the work of its own George Berkeley off the *Moderatorship syllabus* until 1910 is not missed). The spirit of successive ages is reflected in the prescribed reading on courses like ethics, as well as in the late development of a school of modern history; the eccentric progress of the Medical School, the avant-garde adoption of Engineering, and the foundation of impressive traditions in mathematics and astronomy are absorbingly demonstrated. Much is done to explain why a Trinity education had the effect it did. "A graduate who went to Oxford or Cambridge for post-graduate study was apt to be alarmed at first by the cultured chatter he heard from the lips of men, not obviously more intelligent than himself, and to conclude that he must be a provincial ignoramus; but later on, when he found that when he imparted what he thought were pieces of standard textbook knowledge he was listened to with interest and respect, the perspective altered."

Throughout, *plenas* is eschewed to an extent that may surprise those unaccustomed to the Trinity mind. The authors dismiss K. C. Bailey's earlier *History* as irritatingly Panglossian; "there is scarcely a note of criticism of anybody except Caesar Wilde". Their own work is not likely to suffer similar censure. Those who were lazy or mediocre are shortly categorized as such. A reforming Fellow is described as "campaigning against jobbery with the single-mindedness of a quarrelsome man for whom nobody is likely to make a job". The examining methods of a recent incumbent of the chair of Surgery receive short shrift ("if you were a Corkman, a rugby player or the son of a Freemason, then your prospects were good, but if you had other affiliations, or too heavily pigmented a skin, you needed to know your surgery very well indeed"). Names are named and postmortems punctured, in the most respectable Trinity tradition (Walter Sturte is as "ungrammatically described as 'the sort of professor of which every university ought to have one', but not more than one"). Feline generalizations are inserted into the text ("young men dependent on seniority for promotion are always in favour of a retiring age, but for most of them there comes a time in later middle age when they begin to wonder

whether the arguments are quite as compelling as they thought"). The tone is no-nonsense, sometimes almost flip; sense is rated above sensibility throughout. It is, in a word, exactly right for the story it has to tell.

That story ends in 1952, with a place revolution whereby the ancient and powerful Board which governed the college was finally forced to share some of its powers, and a new era commenced. The social nature of the college has changed since then, reflecting wider changes in Irish society; the "Kiplingist" life of students in the 1920s described by Webb and McDowell is redolent of a bygone age. In following the fortunes of the bastion of Dublin's Protestant middle class, this history incidentally paints a portrait of that class; not only the scholarly dynasties of Stokeses, Gwynnes and Laughtons, but also the vanished ethos of a society where, in the authors' words, the term "gentleman" covered "not only the owner of 1500 acres of good grazing land in Tipperary, but also the rentier living in Rathmines on £800 a year from Consols". This is in strong contrast, not only to agonized definitions of gentility across St George's Channel, but also to the *lumpenbourgeoisie* of Belfast. "All the term [gentleman] really meant was a man who did not have to get up in the morning if he did not want to; and in Ireland this implied neither great breeding nor very great wealth."

It is a vanished world, which mingled confident assumptions, blinkered expectations, and implicit Philistinism with considerable - even unique - intellectual attainments. The revolutions of twentieth-century Ireland inevitably affected the way all these characteristics had been reflected in Trinity College. Curiously, under the new dispensation De Valera proved a far better friend to the college than did the Fine Gael opposition; there are further ironies in the college's history since 1952 which are indicated but which lie outside this history's brief.

In a careful foreword, written while he was still Provost of the College, F. S. L. Lyons describes the authors as "to the right of centre" in their attitude towards recent phases of Trinity's evolution; this comes through clearly, and their own activities on the Board (as well as their past constitutional struggles of 1952) will be evaluated by the historians of the future who takes the tale into its next phase. But in providing an "academic history" which so often diversifies into a social and intellectual profile of an entire class and mentality, Professors Webb and McDowell have left a very hard act to follow.



"Couple walking, rue Terre Neuve, Meudon", a gouache by Gwen John (1876-1939) painted probably in the late 1920s, from an exhibition of her work at the Anthony d'Offay Gallery, 9 Dering Street, New Bond Street, London W1, until August 22. Another gouache from the same exhibition is reproduced on page 749.

The Prisoner of Tenda

In so much thickness how can we
Dare propose some resonant philosophy
Although Sarah the Keeper of Calligraphy
Sees no difficulty in being born?
Ask and ask and the deftness will return.

Cunning is the comfort, or persecution;
Money and looks and there being too many persons.
Rushtal rides into town on those versions
Of natural skill they prided in the Marches.
Afterwards, lovers feel the bite of midges.

Boiling over, it sets journalists
With lists of absolutely vital names to waste.
The gods are serious, that's why they press
Us to the grave with time: take severity
And let today or bore us with eternity.

So to the Collective: down on the firm
They raise those public ghosts of ideal form,
The first work of the world to name a name.
Tina and Torah flame warily mythic
Among the shades of our Museum Gothic.

It's professional having fun; it has its rules.
Stories from side-shows, news from the two Poles.
Listen to the scholar: a beached sea-mule
Caged and stared at, cried until it died.
Tears at what we see are no cool creed.

Peter Porter

Conceptual connections

Arthur C. Danto

ANTHONY QUINTON

Thoughts and Thinkers
365pp. Duckworth. £28.
0 7136 1150 X

"On the whole it has been hard for British readers to gain a balanced and comprehensive view of this most intellectually serious and articulate version of Neo-Marxism". Anthony Quinton writes in an essay on the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School, providing the missing balanced, comprehensive view. Various heights and deserts of philosophical and near-philosophical thought are here explored by Mr Quinton in the congenial role of intellectual traveller, recounting his adventures for the entertainment and edification of the home-bound reader, who is vicariously guided in thirty-three expeditions through some more or less exotic precincts of conceptual literature. The superbly equipped author is undaunted by the logical glacialities of Russell, Quine, Popper, C. I. Lewis, and the Polish logicians, or by the dense overgrowth and dark verbal rain-forests of Hegelian, Marxist, and Freudian expression. He tells us about Marshall McLuhan and Mortimer Adler: he even conducts us over the parched headlands of Victorian philosophical thought. Should the reader care to book passage to some challenging or improbable site, he will learn what gear to carry, and be armed with two or three good strong arguments with which to fight off the surly and uncouth natives. We are much in the debt of the enterprising editors who commissioned most of the essays reprinted in this valuable book, and I regret only that no one asked him to chart the *camargue* of Post-structuralist thought in France. I would rather read him on Derrida, Lacan, Foucault, or Lyotard than on Croom Robertson, say, the first editor of *Mind*, who has little interest for any save the most archivist temperament.

The analogy to *littérature de voyage* is neither inexact nor meant to be diminishing. The presumed audience for these essays is the general intellectual reader and not, for the most part, the specialist. Quinton is widening horizons, making distant things accessible, breaking down parochialisms, at the least bringing news. Each of the essays addresses something of general intellectual interest, unless an exception is to be made of the virtuous account of British Idealism and Victorian philosophy, whose slumbering texts and dried and faded thoughts are held up for examination in an exercise of supererogatory historical zeal; while the narrator drops names it is safe to say have not been dropped often in the past century and perhaps were not often dropped when their bearers were alive. While perhaps the most original of the essays, I doubt whether this is a bit of history we must be condemned to repeat in case we are ignorant of it.

Divided somewhat arbitrarily into two main sections - "Thoughts" and "Thinkers" - the style of the essays is that of the *New York Review of Books*, perhaps a style Quinton helped to set, as eight of them originally appeared there. The division is arbitrary since almost any of the essays could be appropriately be assigned to either division. This is because, in presenting a topic - a "thought" - Quinton prefers to offer views defined against views actually held by identifiable historical or contemporary thinkers, while in presenting a thinker, he uses the opportunity to expose some larger thought in connection with which the thinker is, in his opinion, usefully understood. Because of his historical responsibility and theoretical sensitivity, it is difficult to think of anyone writing today who quite matches this high level of what it is not an insult to designate philosophical journalism.

That even the trained and professional philosopher can, with as much profit as the general reader, get quite a lot from this essays (they are essays and not articles or papers and are always something more than polemic) is a fact which follows

from Quinton's statement of his own mind and motives. He writes of his "concern for the openness of philosophy to the rest of intellectual life and to philosophy's own past". By implication philosophy has been closed and unhistorical, has been what Quinton feels it should not be: "a confined debate between a handful of specialists about a few topics of current and strictly professional concern". So it is more than a philosopher addressing non-philosophers, it is a philosopher exhibiting what he believes philosophy ought really to be. With this as subtext, the book asks to be perceived as something more than a collection of occasional pieces of intellectual geography.

Now historical urbanity and intellectual hospitality are virtues of the civilized mind, and such publications as the NYRB or the TLS exist because there is widely acknowledged. Whether or not particular philosophers have shared these virtues, they have not been conspicuous in philosophical writing in the period in which Quinton came up and during which, given his interests and views of philosophy, he must have felt himself somewhat constantly on the defensive. In the 1950s and 1960s, philosophy seemed to set itself into a deliberately anti-historical posture correlatively with insisting upon its own autonomy as a discipline. The two attitudes were mutually justifying. Most of the major philosophical movements of the middle generation of this century were concerned to formulate something philosophy

uniquely does, some programme of activity to be distinguished not only from what would be done by the sciences, but also from what had been done by the philosophers of the past, who were deeply confused as to the nature of their work. To study them would be a wasted effort, unless one had a taste for pathologies of thought, or a charitable impulse to redeem those few figures who might have hit upon some salvageable view. "Doing philosophy" was snifflily set off from talking about the past, or doing anything else but it, whatever it might be. Insularity is the obverse of iconoclasm, and philosophers came to care about philosophers as philosophers and about nobody else much at all. In this as in much else, philosophy was in the vanguard of the anti-historical and self-sufficient attitudes more violently and more grossly enacted in the name of the Cultural Revolution or the Counter-culture a decade later.

It is safe to say that the charms of the old iconoclasm have tarnished, robbing Quinton of a virtue target. But a question remains as to what the interest of philosophers in their own history or the disciplines of others should be. Even in that period of isolationism, it might have been plain that there is an internal connection between the way philosophy perceives its past and the way it perceives itself. So the question of what our relationship to history or "the rest of intellectual life" should be cannot be separated from the question of what we are. And this, I think, nobody really

knows. "We still do not know how philosophical texts should be interpreted," writes one of philosophy's best contemporary historians, Dieter Henrich. At the beginning of a study of Kant, But this is because we do not know what philosophy itself is, for all the brave efforts at self-definition we have lived through. In his preface, Quinton discloses that he does not think "that there are any eternal truths about either the actual or the ideal relationship between philosophy and other sorts of intellectual life or its own history which are substantial enough to be worth trying to formulate very precisely". But this is tantamount to saying that there are no eternal truths about philosophy itself, or perhaps to take it as an eternal truth that about philosophy there is no final truth to tell.

This is certainly what comes through the essays. There is no central organizing vision of philosophy or of philosophy. Or there is simply the performative definition, which is the philosophical equivalent of voting with one's feet, that philosophy is generally intellectual criticism, to be governed by clarity and good sense. Clarity and good sense are great virtues, and they are virtues of this book. But Quinton lacks an originary view of his discipline which would make for an excitement it is perhaps also his belief that we are better off without.

As intellectual criticism it is very fair though not, of course, altogether non-partisan. Certain of the figures brushed

up are clearly objects of Quinton's admiration. Hobbes's "intellectual pride is a timely reminder of what is possible to the human mind". Russell and Popper and C. I. Lewis are treated with qualified, Quine with almost unqualified respect. Hegel is too important historically to ignore and too out of bounds finally to accept, and he takes a good many sneers. G. E. Moore, whom one would have thought Hegel's antithesis, and who occupies the somewhat infrequent role of a saint in contemporary philosophy, has ladeisful of scorn faced with irony poured over him. The discussion of egalitarianism is uniquely impatient and not up to Quinton's characteristic level of exposition and criticism. The only topic I think wholly beyond his considerable grasp is the artistic avant-garde he discusses in an essay on cultural élitism, where the tone is that of an outraged milord pretending to a certain distant, chill amusement at the shenanigans of aesthetic wogs. These are minor departures.

Almost as a trait of character, Quinton takes the positions he opposes seriously, if not always on their own terms, representing them accurately enough to excuse his taste for pedagogical mockery. He is a natural instructor, and his relish for making the difficult clear, the obscure palpable, and the fantastic even plausible, is gratifying. For the kind of thinking and reading for which models are possible, these are models of reading and thinking. If you cannot be drunk, this is the way to be sober.

The isness business

Thomas Baldwin

C. J. F. WILLIAMS

What is Existence?
359pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford
University Press. £17.50.
0 19 824429 0

From the very first stirrings of philosophical speculation philosophers have debated the nature of being, or existence. In this century philosophers as otherwise diverse as Heidegger and Moore have agreed that questions about the nature of Being, or what there really is, are the fundamental questions of philosophy. Within the analytic tradition of philosophy, one approach to these questions has predominated, according to which existence is not a property of individual objects at all. It makes no sense to say "Margaret Thatcher exists". Instead, it is maintained, the only way in which the concept of existence can be properly employed is in making general claims, such as "Tame tigers exist", which can be understood as predicating, not existence, but instantiation of the property of being a tame tiger. Actually, this is not quite how such general existential claims would stand: they would be understood within this tradition; rather, the logician's concept of a quantifier is introduced, and it is claimed that the use of

"exist" in "Tame tigers exist" is captured by the use of the existential quantifier in "For some x , x is a tame tiger", hence Quine's famous dictum that "existence is what the existential quantifier expresses".

It is this orthodoxy which C. J. F. Williams expounds and defends. After describing how Hume and Kant roughly anticipate it, he explains in detail how Frege first articulated it in the context of his theory of natural numbers; and throughout his long book Williams adverts to Fregean themes to defend his position. The central claim he seeks to establish is that existence is not a property of individual objects. In support of this claim he advances three arguments: (i) If existence were a property of individual objects it would be a property of all of them but no genuine properties can be thus universal; (ii) If existence were a property of individual objects, denials of existence, such as "Margaret Thatcher does not exist" would make sense; but they do not; (iii) We have no real use for sentences such as "Margaret Thatcher exists".

These are pretty unpersuasive arguments: Moore observed long ago that since some true existential claims are contingent, modal considerations can (*contra* (ii)) give good sense to positive existential claims (as in "Though Margaret Thatcher exists, she might not have done") and to negative ones (*contra* (iii)) (as in

"One can coherently suppose that Margaret Thatcher does not exist"), and (*contra* (i)) suggest that in some way existence is not universal (as in "Some things which might exist don't").

Williams certainly attempts to counter this line of criticism, and similar criticisms which invoke the straightforward use of existence in temporal contexts ("Socrates no longer exists") and in indirect speech ("Margaret Thatcher does not know that Christopher Williams exists"). In each case his strategy is to allow that these complex existential claims make sense, but to deny, surface grammar notwithstanding, that existence is here predicated of an individual object within them; thus he produces paraphrases of them in which, he maintains, what they say is said without any appearance of predicating existence of an individual.

This strategy is deficient both in general conception and detailed execution. The general problem is that one can extract complex predicates of individual objects from Williams's paraphrases which, it seems, must express existence if the paraphrases are correct: the points of detail arise from Williams's liberal use of ad hoc constraints and contentious extra assumptions - such as that for each individual object there is a property which necessarily applies to it and to it alone (this seems to entail the identity of indiscernibles). The result, in my case, was that being left unconvinced by Williams's arguments, I was all the more inclined to take the view he rejects.

Two features of his arguments at this point, and elsewhere in the book, call for special comment. First there is the question of his attitude to one common account of existence, as the property of being the same as something. The merit of this account is that it both preserves the point of the thought that "existence is what the existential quantifier expresses" and itself constitutes a derivative property of individual objects. Williams officially rejects this suggestion on the grounds that it requires the assumption that identity is a relation between an individual and itself, an assumption which he claims without argument to be false. Not only would one expect such an important (and anti-Fregean) claim to be supported by some arguments: it is also disconcerting to find that identity, as a relation between an individual and itself, plays an important role in his

account of modal and tensed existential claims, and it is hard to resist the conclusion that in these arguments he does identify existence with being the same as something.

Secondly, there is the question of the significance to be attached to the use of one logical notation over any other. Throughout his book Williams employs Polish notation, whose distinctive feature is that it requires no brackets to mark distinctions of logical scope; this makes it easy for computers to read (they usually use the idiom known as "reverse Polish") but hard for most humans to read (it is notable that when Williams's formulae stretch right across a page he adds brackets to aid comprehension). Nothing of substance, one might think, hinges on choice of notation; but Williams claims that because of the rule about the dispensability of brackets Polish notation has the merit of revealing that predicate operators cannot be distinguished from sentential ones and thus that there is no distinction between the internal and external negation of propositions in which a predicate is attached to a name. This claim is an important one, since just such a distinction with respect to negative existential claims is a familiar feature of the views of those who allow that existence is a property of individuals. What is startling in Williams's position is the claim that something as important as this could hang on a choice of notation. In fact, of course, it doesn't; one can just use different letters, or constructions, to distinguish sentential from predicate operators.

I have so far concentrated on Williams's central claim about existence, that it is not a predicate of individual objects, and I have sufficiently indicated why I think that he does not establish it. In the latter part of the book he ranges over a wide variety of topics in logic, and his treatment of them is to some extent separable from his central claims about existence. For example, he argues that we can make good sense of the use of quantifiers which bind sentential variables, as in "For some p , Williams believes that p ", and on this point I agree with him, though I doubt if a sceptic on this matter would be persuaded by Williams's discussion of it. Among these latter chapters, that on fiction and possible worlds seemed to me especially interesting and well-expressed. I wish the rest of the book had been the same.

Interested Party - by Russell Davies

The launching of *Larkin at Sixty** It must have been grand to be there. Did they set out the spread in a bicycle-shed? Or a train, or a graveyard, or where? Were the invites on library-tickets? Was He wearing His M.C.C. tie? Were there Ewart and Heaney (and Bleaney?) and Wain? Was there actual scotch, or did Kingsley complain That a superabundance of sodding champagne Just made a man wide, not high?

No, surely they held it at Faber's. There must be a room for these do's. A normal-type, formal-type Eliot Room, with a couple of tables for booze. Monteth will have ordered some flowers (and probably none'll arrive). But there, on a trolley, symbolical scraps Called twiggles and toasties and savoury maps Are waiting to fuel the talented traps Of Andrew, and John, and Clive.

And here is the Poet arriving, some minutes ahead of the crowd. (For all that he wouldn't, you can't say he *couldn't*; it's fiction, for crying out loud.) He strolls, with his hands in his pockets, as though he were kicking up leaves. Then moons to the window and watches the birds (Their singing so pleasingly barren of words) And waits for the inrush of toppers and turds All nursing their private peevs.

In fact, though, they've treated him kindly. The book's an "agreeable romp". (But it hasn't the *tone* of a Wingy Manone attacking the *Tar Paper Stomp* . . .) There's nothing remotely disgraceful, and no one to ban from the binge. Just part of a chapter is crap to the core - The one by that actor chap, bit of a bore, Who looks like an owl and whines like a saw, The one from *Beyond the Fringe*.

The joint, within minutes, is jumping. Cacophony builds by degrees. (If Faber's have neighbours, they're kept from their labours by raving occasions like these.) Now poet must holler to poet; and Larkin must mime his hellos - To the utter enchantment of Christopher Ricks Who loves, above all things, the way meanings mix. "Did Larkin mean 'Hell-o' or 'Hull-o'?" (He likes His lips, as an essay grows.)

The room is a mass reputation, a roistering riot of names, As Armit and Conquest engage in a song-fest and Porter talks daughters with James; Now Gavin's describing a rhyme-scheme; and John is enGrossed with his host, Comparing the ethics of zeugma and pun; While, honoured and old, in a circle of sun, John Betjeman sits (for his Motion is Dumm) Responding to every toast.

By the way, were some losels invited? Have loblollies joined the elect? Well who are those others, bespectacled brothers, it seems, in some species of sect? Not lecturers, surely? Or *lispers*? (Their whispers are tricky to catch) And surely not louts, you can tell by their dress: Those trousers, though shiny, are fresh from the press . . . They must be the bloody *librarians*! Yes, A typical horn-rimmed batch.

Let's focus again upon Larkin: a figure that he'd call "unfraid". Up close, and *in toto*, he's not like his photo - you get no idea of the scale. He's bigger, and seemingly louder; alarmingly bolsterous eyes. His forehead's more favoured with bumps than with rats; Near-pendulous lobes (and a touch of the guts); And cheeks that are baggy (for hoarding the nuts Of foreigners, poofs and spies).

Too risky to say what he stands for - but there he unblinkingly stands, Like a lighthouse, maybe, overlooking the sea on behalf of indifferent sands . . . A gaze on the lookout for salvage, for what can be plucked from the night: For reverent feeling, where God used to be; If not for the Tree of Life, life in a tree; For "I don't kid anyone, least of all me"; For keeping The End in sight;

For childlessness, Hardy, the Seasons; for everything verging on dull; For catching of happiness; scorning of crappiness; lexical snappiness; Haul; For Henry 'Red' Allen and Condon; for Ribblesdale rather than Rome; For loneliness raised to the purpose of leisure; For losses collected like personal treasures; For England, and Beauty (but not beyond measure, And not very much for Home.)

Alas for the technical poacher: from Larkin there's little to steal. No standardised metres, or thoughts that repeat as resource and afflatus congeal. No personal code-words (well, hardly; you couldn't call 'toad' *recondite*) So the nearest we get to those twitches and ticks That critics call characteristics (or tricks) Is the *negative prefix* - says Christopher Ricks, In which he is not unright.

It's tempting to break up the party - they lurch off in search of some food - And to leave Philip Larkin alone in the dark in a parody Larkinesque mood. But having immersed him, unbidden, in hoggerel-moggerel verse, The least I can do is give over, dear, Withdraw while he's still got a drink in his fist, And leave him to get Nobel-prizably pissed (And nuts to the looming horae).

Were you ever trapped in the Buffet, at Doncaster, Preston or Brum? A fly in your custard, while round you were mustered assorted mad cripples and scum? This almost traditional feeling: intolerance faced with despair. How great an achievement to make it your theme! Not only to say "Things are worse than they seem" But to shape into beauty the life that you deem Unfinished, unline, unfair.

* *Larkin at Sixty*, edited by Anthony Thwaite (148pp., Faber, £7.95, 0 571 11878 X) was launched at Faber's, 3 Queen Square, London, W.C1 on May 24.

Laughter and lamentations

S. S. Prawer

HEINRICH HEINE

Complete Poems

Translated by Hal Draper

1,932pp. Boston: Suhrkamp/Insel
Distributed in the UK by Oxford
University Press. £20.
0 19 8157851

In two important respects this weighty volume keeps the promise of its title. It is indeed as complete as the present state of research allows, containing not only all Heine's lyrics, mock-epics, satires and occasional poems, but also his two verse-dramas. No English version past or present can boast a comparable coverage: we are even given, in a helpful section of Notes, translations of important variant readings and excisions. Hal Draper's renderings may claim to be modern in the sense that Louis Untermeyer's were in an earlier day; they make free use of twentieth-century idiom but are not afraid of introducing archaisms when conventionally "poetic" effects are required. Heine himself, it will be remembered, was fond of playing the archaic and "poetic" against the contemporary and offhand.

These translations may be called English however, only in a strictly limited sense – for a successful reading can only be achieved if the British reader cultivates a transatlantic accent. He must always pronounce "nitch" as "nitch", stress "mustache" and "revelle" on the first and "frontier" on the second syllable, and be prepared to let "quarters" rhyme with "orders" and "cadavers" with "savors". He will find old ladies "putting hexes" onto young ones or baking "loaf cakes" (whatever that is) for the "cooksies" (whatever that is) for the "cats". Mr Draper's Heine searches for a "dizzy dame", finding that it's "just no go" as

he is driven here and there "for fair". The Romans are credited with "omorous mamas" (and it's not mothers that are meant); Dame Venus asks to be "beat up"; Phæton rides "his solar buggy"; angels are "for real"; a former discipline has "gotten free" of Goethe. When people are called "dumb" they must be presumed foolish, not silent; the "ass" which plays a prominent part in several of the poems is not the kind that is grey and has long ears.

All this would seem fair enough in a version principally intended for the American market; it can even turn into a delightful game when we catch the devil who uses Göttingen student-slang in Heine's original poem mouthing one of Harvard's favourite Humphrey Bogart catch-phrases in Draper's version. It becomes objectionable, however, when such transpositions destroy Heine's carefully judged social tone and speech-register. "If you're on intimate terms with dames" is not at all the same thing as "I find du vertragen Umgang mit Damen", nor is "I yearn for you so painfully / Until I'm nearly daff" an adequate equivalent of "Ich sehne mich so sehr nach dir, / Ich rufe nach dir, ich schmachte".

But let us return to the good news. Draper's translation deserves praise not only for its completeness, but also for its faithful adherence to Heine's stanza-patterns and rhyme-schemes. It has not proved possible, of course, to keep exactly to the poet's carefully judged alternation of accented and unaccented line-ending. Bisyllabic or feminine rhymes, the Foreword rightly tells us, "are more congenial to German verse than to English"; but ones or baking "loaf cakes" (whatever that is) for the "cooksies" (whatever that is) for the "cats". Mr Draper's Heine searches for a "dizzy dame", finding that it's "just no go" as

intention comes across splendidly in stanzas like "The canon opened his fat face / Love must not be coarse, you know, / It's bad for the health in that case." A young girl is asked, "Why so?" though the social ambience would be better caught, I think, if "young lady" were substituted for "young girl" in the last line. Stanzas like "The sun sinks into the ocean, / A last ray flashes above, / And points with a golden finger / To where I lost my love" reproduce the rhythm and thought-sequence of their original so faithfully that they could easily be sung, without distortion of vocal line, to the notes Schubert fitted to their German original.

Imagery and movement of the famous "sea-gull" poem from *Serraphine* have been perfectly caught in the lines "Dear soul, dear fugitive spirit, / There's fear and pain in your cry / You are too near the water! / The moon hangs far on high." Draper has as pungent a way with rhymed insult as his original: "A fat cigar stuck in the face, / They go their way with stolid phlegm; / No doubt they have good stomachs too – / If only one could stomach them!" and his punch-lines again and again match those of Heine himself: "Truth's disappearing from the planet; / Gone is the faithfulness of yore, / Dogs fawn, and stink as much as ever, / But they're not faithful any more." The prodigious drive without question: "It spices up his drink a bit" And also aids digestion." Karl Marx, I feel sure, would have been delighted by Draper's rendering of a favourite quotation from *Germany. A Winter's Tale*: "Yes, sugar peas for everyone / Piled high upon the barrows! / The heavens we can safely leave / To the angels and the sparrows", though someone unfamiliar with the original might wonder what a "sugar pea" might be.

The more menacing tones that occasionally invade Heine's poetry ring out convincingly in the English version of *Die schlesischen Weber*: "The shuttle flies, the loom creaks loud, / Night and day we weave your shroud." Old Germany, your shroud we sit, / We're weaving a threefold curse in it, / We're weaving, we're weaving! And the dark world view of some of the late poems is conveyed without loss of force in lines like "Heroes' lives will bleed away, / And the worst will win the day," or in the rendering of a little poem prefixed to Section II of the *Romanzen*:

Happiness is a giddy gift
And always dislodged to stay;
She puts your head, gives you a whiff,
Kisses you quick, and fills away.

But Lady Sorow now! Don't worry,
She's just the very opposite:
She holds you fast – she's in no hurry –
She sits down by your bed to knit.

Mr Draper is at his best when he trusts his author; but that does not mean he invariably extends far enough. Take the mock-epic poem called *Klagelied eines alten Weibes* (sung in one of the few recorded comments on his own metrical practice Heine has carefully explained why the third line in each stanza of that poem should have a foot less than the first; yet in Draper's version line 3 is the same length as line 1. When Heine, in one of his most

powerful last poems, suddenly abandons rhyme for an assonance ("Handvoll" – "Antwort"). Draper scorns the near-perfect equivalent English offers him ("handful" – "answer") in favour of the phonologically heterogeneous line-endings "cold clay" – "answer". Some changes are, of course, necessitated by the compulsions of English rhymes and rhythms; but there remain quite a few that cannot be explained in this way. Why should King Ludwig's "Lapidarstil" be called "gem-like" rather than "lapidary"? Why should the sub-title of *Atta Troll* remain as explicitly Shakespearean as that of *Germany. A Winter's Tale*? Why, if Heine's medieval knights bore true faith "in dem Herzen", should they bear it "upon their breast" in Draper? Why, when Heine tells us specifically that King Charles I is sitting in "a charcoal-burner's hut" (a covert allusion to the *carbonari* of Heine's day), should Draper place him in "a simple workman's hut" without any rhythmic or rhyming gain? Why, when Heine, for purposes of exotic colouring or allusion to his own Jewish heritage, introduces Hebrew forms into his German text ("Jeruscholajim" in *Atta Troll*, "Mausche" in one of the Meyerbeer sketches) should Draper normalize these forms to "Jerusalem" (instead of "Yerushalaim") and "Moses" (instead of "Mosche")? Why when a Jewish figure refers to his son's hunched back ("hoher Rücken") should the translator drag in a crude Jewish stereotype by making him speak, instead, of his son's "hooked nose" which, allegedly, "shows the breed"? Heine was quite capable of using such stereotypes for his own purposes; but there can be no justification for introducing them without his sanction.

As generous acknowledgments in the Foreword make clear, Draper has profited by the advice of two distinguished professors of German literature in American universities. This has undoubtedly helped him to avoid the kind of misunderstanding of Heine's words which so often mars translations of his writings into other languages; yet he misses the point occasionally. "Den ersten besten Mann" is by no means the same thing as "the first good man". "Wir hätten einen Nero jetzt / Statt Landesvater drei Dutzend" opposes the sheer stature of the monstrous Nero to the mediocrity of petty German sovereigns, who may or may not be quite good-natured – a contrast which is destroyed by the rendering "Only one and not three dozen Neros". "Gar lichte Geschöpfchen und Tröpfchen" insults the Swabian poets by patronizingly patting their heads – a much more effective way, I think, than the crudely insulting "How the mimes fumble and mumble" which is here offered as an equivalent. "Wir treiben jetzt Familienglück" accurately rendered in Altfister Elliot's recent translation of the *Lazarus* poems as "We're busy with domestic bliss", becomes the feebly conventional "For family happiness we yearn" in the Draper version. In the same way Elliot's "the scent of those rejected flowers" is far closer to "der verschmilteten Blumen Duft" than Draper's ambiguous "genitive

metaphor "the fragrant flowers of my disdain."

Natural word and phrase associations have often to be wrenched, when reading Draper's translations, if a line is to make oneself forced to read "Soon I'll follow reader", "dragons and vampires", "They made a great big to-do", "I tried to rise and stand up", and "fun contours", without any warrant in the original. Some lines defy reading aloud – try "Upon your heart I saw the serpent feed; / I saw, my love, how wretched you are indeed!" The only way to make that last line the equivalent of Heine's "Ich sah, mein Lieb, wie sehr du elend bist" is to reduce "wretched" to a monosyllable: a Procrustean solution that will find few friends on this side of the Atlantic.

Mr Draper allows himself occasional descents into Dennis-the-Dachshund language ("This they will understand never"; "When I hear Hungary's name outcried") and offers as translation of Heine's idiomatic and pellucid German such infelicities as "In dream I saw a man . . ." (might not "I dream showed me a man" be better?) or "I seem to hear a distant ringing / Of watchmen's horns . . ." Even in America, one would have thought, "horns" hardly "ring". Some famous lines are reduced to gibberish. Are we seriously being offered "From older times it flings out / A beckoning white hand" as a translation of "Aus alten Märchen winkt es / Hervor mit weisser Hand", or is Draper having us on? There are similar horrors elsewhere: "But he awoke and thrust it deep / In Caesar's breast the daggers thud"; "Grant that in this mighty temple / How the stairs are inconvenient"; "Old Moses has long gone to potting"; "I have heard of going to pot, but this is ridiculous. If that is the price we have to pay for rigid adherence to Heine's verse-patterns, it is too steep by half.

In poems whose effect depends on spareness and economy, tautology seems particularly unwelcome. Examples of padding, however, are found in several places: "For millennia now, as brothers / We've borne with each other an age", for instance, or "mad dream of mine / That once tormented my own heart". Comparison with other translations underlines this; as equivalent of "ich bin zu Grund gerichtet" (*Zum Lazarus* 7), Elliot's quiet "I've come to grief" proves much more effective, in its context, than Draper's insistent "That you've destroyed me through and through". One regrets especially the introduction of *Ohs* and *Ahs* into lines that have no such exclamations in the original: "Du bist wie eine Blume" becomes "Oh, you are like a flower", "Ich hatte einst ein schönes Vaterland" appears as "Oh, once I had a lovely fatherland", and "Dolce wie ein Lilienglor" as "Oh, how snow-white lily flowers". It is not Aaron Kramer's "You're lovely as a flower" preferable to Draper's breathy emotionalism?

These are but some of the complaints that can be and will be made about this new version of Heine's poetry. But Draper's labour of love – begun, he tells us, in 1948, and finished in the mid-1970s – has not been in vain: for no one can read his way through this book without gaining a powerful impression of the variety and unity of the poet to whose work Draper has consecrated some twenty-five years of his life. Heine's calculated simplicities, his self-conscious and often self-parodying sentimentality, his play with a wide variety of personae, his powerful blending of accusation, laughter, and lament, again and again ring out loud and clear. It is important to remember that Draper's version has the deficiencies of this review has attempted to point out, so that we do not lay them to the charge of its originals. The translator will, no doubt, want to make some revisions in future reissues. Once we have made the necessary allowances, however, we can surely accept this book gratefully as an approximation to the work of the poet so well described in its Foreword: "poising, declaiming, miming, complaining, accusing, lying, loving, justifying, hating, defaming, begging, horrifying, delighting – in other words, busy being Heine."

Richard Murphy

Discreet charms and eternal squiddities

Adam Mars-Jones

CARLOS FUENTES

Distant Relations
Translated by Margaret Sayers Peden
225pp. Secker and Warburg. £7.95.
0 436 16764 6

In his new novel Carlos Fuentes sets out to combine the virtues of Proust and Borges, and ends up with those of H. P. Lovecraft; *Distant Relations* is a B-movie squaddering as an art film.

The story straddles the Old World and the New, just as the style seeks to accommodate both realism and prose-poetry. One lunchtime the narrator, unnamed till the book's penultimate section, meets an old friend, the octogenarian Comte de Brany, in the

dining room of the Automobile Club de France. Through the afternoon and evening, Brany tells the story of his recent extraordinary experiences in Mexico and Paris.

Having met in Mexico a congenial father and son called Hugo and Victor Heredia, Brany invited them to stay with him in Paris. His guests turned out to play the game of looking up their namesakes in the telephone directory wherever they happened to be, and sometimes visiting these far-flung Heredias. There was a Victor Heredia in the Paris phone-book, who lived in Enghien-les-Bains, and Brany, entering into the spirit of the game, drove out with young Victor to pay him a visit.

Brany crashed his car, and was forced to spend some days with the French Heredia in order to recuperate.

Dolphin love

Bill Buford

TED MOONEY

Easy Travel to Other Planets
279pp. Cape. £6.95.
0 224 02931 2

Melissa is a marine biologist asked to spend three weeks alone studying a male dolphin. Towards the end of her stay, she is surprised by how intimate she and her subject feel when together. Not only do they succeed in communicating with remarkable ease – chuckling and squeaking until way past bed-time – but, more important, Melissa finds she is taking to water with unrestrained glee.

For his part, Peter, the dolphin, accepts it as perfectly natural that this otherwise undolphinlike creature should behave in such a dolphinlike manner and that, quite reasonably, he should soon feel such a strong dolphinlike attraction to her. It takes

some time, however, for Peter to get this particularly powerful feeling across, and Melissa is not able to understand it until the last day of her study. It is then, after some carefully protracted foreplay conducted in the shallow end of the upstairs swimming pool, that Melissa and Peter unite in a moment of delicate aquatic congress.

It is difficult not to regard Ted Mooney's cool first novel as something of a literary publicity stunt: the book that manages to pull off what no one else has got around to trying. It is also not terribly difficult to dismiss it as merely a publicity stunt: the book that pulls off what no one else could be bothered with. But both criticisms disregard the strangely ironic world into which "dolphin love" intrudes.

When Melissa finally leaves Peter, she re-enters an urban centre mesmerized by television culture, in which all emotion is trivialized to the level of television drama. The streets are crowded with people collapsing in fits of new epidemic "information sickness" (deliriously

The personal touch

Colin Greenland

HARLAN ELLISON

Shatterday
313pp. Hutchinson. £7.95.
0 09 14760 2

For this British edition of Harlan Ellison's latest collection Hutchinson omit all but one of his Introductions, which guard every story in the Houghton Mifflin original. They could have cut them all. One Ellison is enough without another doing the commentary. In an case, Ellison needs no introduction. When he introduces things he has a knack of opening paragraphs with "Look, it's like this", grabbing for the buttonhole but jabbing, as often as not, a thumb in the eye – an assault he would regard as artistically and morally justified. In the introduction that survives Ellison describes his "mission": "I spend my life and miles of visceral material in a glorious and painful series of midnight raids against complacency." Writing fiction "is an act of revolutionary guerrilla warfare". He does it to shock or frighten, conjuring up our "mortal terrors" to remind us of our common lot as puny creatures in a indifferent universe. Whether this is a true or even coherent account of his artistic motives does not matter. It establishes that Ellison is after the personal touch, preferably on an exposed nerve; he is compulsively hyperbolic; and if he offends it is with good will.

Ellison developed the habit of introducing in *Dangerous Visions*, his anthology of "taboo-breaking" science fiction, published in 1967. Even then many of the stories seemed somewhat less tremendous than his fanfare and alarms proclaimed: something similar is the case now. Ellison does not employ suspense and revelation, a spring-loaded punchline, or any of the devices by which a

narrative can literally shock its reader. Nor does he go in much for moral shock, the frisson of contemplating the unmentionable. Two stories about sex, for example, "Would You Do It for a Penny?" and "How's the Night Life on Cissaldis?", are respectively a seduction fantasy and an extended smutty joke: routine, even sexist. He is more often annoying than shocking; but he can certainly be personal.

The centrepiece of this collection is "All the Lies that are My Life", twenty thousand words of fictional self-exposure for which Ellison adopts the unusual expedient of two personae: a rich, flamboyant SF writer and his somewhat less manic old friend, who narrates the story of the writer's death and peculiarly binding bequests. It takes restraint, not just ego, to do this at all well, and Ellison does it well enough. If the theme is how the dead actually do possess the living, the theme of "Shatterday", whose protagonist is also subdivided, is how the living dispossess the dead. "Shatterday" begins like "All the Lies" in a characteristic flurry of wisecracks, then quiets and ends somberly. It is the more effective story. In fact, and I doubt that this is only a prejudice of national character, Ellison's most successful and disturbing stories are those which are least exhibitionist, least coarsened by his preferred aggressive manner: "Count the Clock that Tells the Time", about the limbo of human ineffectuality; "All the Birds Come Home to Roost", in which an undeserving man is revisited by all the women he has ever coupled with, one by one, in reverse order; "Optim", a suicide ballad; and "The Other Eye of Polyphemus", a graceful parable of Puritany and a comforter who cannot identify his own desires.

This last is Ellison writing as Hemingway – no fireworks, no trumpets, and it is the most accomplished and powerful piece in the book. Surely there is significance in that?

During this period it became clear that the French Heredia was a supernatural creature intent on capturing the Mexican Victor and taking him back in time (or out of it altogether) to be a companion for his own son André. This theory was confirmed for Brany when he came upon Victor and André engaged in mystical sex in the crashed Citroën.

My embarrassed summary takes the plot a little past its half-way point; far enough, anyway, to suggest that the story is a preposterous mess, claiming to explore the high themes of heredity, identity and memory while allowing its author to overdo on mannerism and flabby Gothic.

While the author basks, the reader founders. Fuentes loads his text with allusions and fireworks, without ever producing a memorable phrase or a

disconnected speech, apparent disorientation, and the desire to touch everything for which the only cure is complete memory elimination. Others – the healthy ones – cluster in groups of a new emotion: everyone agreeing that the old staid ways were getting a little showpewy these days, with what the proliferation of confessional therapies, advertising agencies, TV personalities.

Personal life is no salvation. At the airport she is met by Jeffrey, the man she lives with. Her arrival interrupts the affair he is conducting with an attractive blonde named Clarice, and momentarily delays the affair he contemplates beginning with Melissa's best friend, Nikki. Nikki, also at the airport, is about to fly to California for her sixth abortion, even though she feels she ought to keep this baby for the man she believes she may want to marry and who may or may not be the father. Eventually freed from both (who rejoins Clarice) and Nikki (who continues in her indecision), Melissa visits her mother, who, even while dying of cancer, is about to have a "short-lived" affair with a man who may or may not leave the woman with whom he has been living for most of his life. Melissa has some trouble taking all this in: and can you blame her?

Attempts to negotiate a fine line between being a very funny book (which it isn't) and soap opera melodrama of the worst sort – a kind of Coronation Street transferred to the young and trendy of Manhattan. But unlike melodrama, where sexual betrayal has dramatic potential because sexual intimacy matters, there is, in Mooney's novel, no sense of betrayal or melodrama if only because nothing matters, in any significant way, at all. Sexuality is merely a unit of trade, and orgasm is reduced to a kind of bizarre social greeting. In the easy world of easy travel, the most agitated emotion derives from an exaggerated form of jet lag. It is entirely in keeping with the novel's laid back tone that when Melissa announces that she and her dolphin are lovers ("and I don't use the term 'lovers' lightly"), Jeffrey wanders into the kitchen with a cool, mellow grace and, toiling a joint with the headlines of the *New York Times*, can respond with only a mild curiosity: "Well, who seduced whom then?"

Ultimately, however, *Easy Travel to Other Planets* is dominated by its quacking submarine sensuality. It smokes, inevitably, of that peculiar and remarkably un-erotic, post-war tradition of "imaginative sexuality": the tradition that, beginning with Philip Roth's demonstration in *Portnoy's Complaint* that not even the contents of the family refrigerator are safe from violation, has included exotic fantasies involving brothers and sisters, dead mothers, household tools, and virtually all animals – domesticated, grazing, and predatory – found on land. Mooney has figured out how to reach the animal in the sea, but in most recent respects, so much cleverness seems such a waste: it is evident that submerged by all this dolphin-love – this Disneyland Flipper made philosopher-king – there is a very serious novel trying to surface.

vivid image. Brany's Spanish servants are introduced with a comparison as piecemeal as José looks "like a figure in a Zurbarán painting", while florid descriptions resemble "an exhausted jai-alais player". This is as much character-drawing as Fuentès provides in this case; the two phrases, which insist on their own precision but convey no information, are repeated word for word a hundred pages later, when the servants reappear.

The infelicities of the book are compounded by a translator with a heavy hand and a tin ear, whose difficulties with English grammar are cruelly highlighted by every long sentence. Take this passage, for example: "My friend felt that in the same way the moon slowly ascended from the familiar garden, from secret moisture between the oaks and birches rising after a long summer's absence to celebrate the return of the abundance of autumn when the woods are sovereigns of their moribund bounty, in the same way the real sounds of the landscape he was observing with such mournful and protracted delight were born in him."

Remove from this the pendulous qualifications and the faltering rhythms, and you are left with a frankly defective sentence: "My friend felt that in the same way A, in the same way B." This is not how the English language,

on its good days, expresses co-relative clauses.

Stilted, snobbish, charmless and elephantine, *Distant Relations* is unlikely to make any converts for Carlos Fuentes. In spite of its dedication to Buñuel and its insistent references to Supervielle, to Lautréamont, to Hölderlin the Younger, to Musset, to Laforgue, to Vallejo, to Neruda and to Paz, its loosest links are to pulp fiction in the Lovecraft mould. Lovecraft, if he was alive, could almost claim to have been plagiarized in passages such as this:

Have you ever paused, my friend, to think about the appalling concept of infinity, time and space without beginning or end? That is what I saw that morning in the shaft of the dumbwaiter. Infinity was like the flesh of a wet, black squid, slimy and slobbery, a texture without color or orientation, the pure vertiginous sensation of a great white mollusk ignorant of time or space.

In the closing pages of *Distant Relations* the narrator is named by the Comte de Brany as "Fuentes", but the reason for this personal appearance by the author is never made clear. Having his name on the spine and the title page should have been embarrassing enough.

Life through death

Holly Eley

LISA ST AUBIN DE TERÁN

Keepers of the House
183pp. Cape. £6.95.
0 224 02001 3

Keepers of the House is a remarkably good first novel, though "novel" is in some ways a misleading term; rather it is a narrative in which Lisa St Aubin de Terán, through the medium of Lydia Tardá, involves Anglo-Saxon readers in the lives of the inhabitants of the Momboy valley. Hispanic preoccupations with allegory, fantasy, fable and violence are interpreted by an Englishwoman whose vision of El Dorado is transmuted, through the impracticalities of life in a strange land with a dying twentieth-century conquistador, into a relatively simple concern for survival and procreation. A panoply of detail bastions verisimilitude, and an attractive plainness of style, as well as the plausibility of the kind of comic exaggeration with which Latin-American writers often feel obliged to present their characters, dispel initial fears of feyness.

The blurb tells us that for seven years Lisa St Aubin de Terán managed her husband's sugar plantation and avocado farm in the foothills of the Andes. On arrival at La Bebella, in this strongly autobiographical book, the force of her naïveté and expectations makes her fantasy work; with death, in the shape of a pet turkey-vulture, temporarily under control, she revives her husband, the melancholic Diego, instils hope in the farm workers who see her as the personification of past Beltrán nobility, and starts to restore the crumbling hacienda. In an

impossibly harsh climate, faced with a series of natural disasters, Lydia Beltrán's optimism (and Terán's imagery) changes; the valley is no longer a fertile place, habitat of frangipani, clematis and hummingbird. Crops wither, sheep die and bookworms and weevils eat their way through library and storeroom; peasant girls no longer turn up for work and are replaced by grotesque Matilde, who moves like a bird of ill-omen "swallowed up" by her own sleeplessness, carrying "a seed of gloom that she'd rolled and kneaded into the corn bread" and stirred into the soup: that she made. But still the hacienda seems to Lydia like home: it was where she belonged and its history had grown under her skin like an anthrax.

Her first child dies in infancy, the husband suffers a stroke; drought has

driven everyone from the valley except for Lydia, Diego, their unborn second child and eighty-nine year old Benito Mendoza, who has served the Beltráns since childhood. Lydia begins, encouraged by Benito, to reconstruct the history of the Beltráns from the day in 1785 on which Rodrigo and Sancho Beltrán first appeared at La Bebella, married the beautiful de Labastida twins and started a dynasty. Through this biography of a family, which forms the main body and is the most original part of *Keepers of the House*, Lydia not only comes to accept Benito's dictum, "Fate has brought you to chronicle our decline", and by so doing to reconcile the reality of her decaying surroundings with her romantic vision, but also, after Benito's death, finds the resolve to escape from the valley if not from the past.

In a series of allegorically headed, self-contained chapters, characters such as the misanthropic Admiral Silence, crazed murderer Arturo Lino and María Candalaria, whose wilfulness causes the massacre of many Beltráns, fan out like a hand of comic cards from the Bezique pack of Amara Sara and Rosa. These two gamble to determine their every move and die still waiting for the suitors who will arrive to end their spinsterhood as Rodrigo and Sancho once rescued the de Labastida sisters. Terán's rich portraits of them, as well as of many other members of families of the first conquistadors who fight famine, dust, locusts and each other, will inevitably be compared to those of García Márquez; a significant difference being that they are seen through the eyes of a European and a woman.

Although the subject of *Keepers of the House* appears to be an intensely observed, colourful family employed as a metaphor for the end of the old order in an exotic place, this is not essentially what the book is about. At the end Lydia, the child in her womb "laden with history before it was born", halts the leap (that she has built single-handed from spare parts) to look for the last time down into the valley and shoots a vulture so that its flock, feeding on the carcass, might be momentarily distracted from her paralysed husband. Here it is the reinforcement of life through death that is symbolized rather than the end of a cycle or of an era.

In effect, this is an account – particularly gripping because of the quality of the writing and the esoteric setting – of a strong-willed young woman's education by experience. Quietly feminist in inspiration, it stands comparison with the novels of Willa Cather, *Wide Sargasso Sea* or Phyllis Shand Allfrey's *The Orchid House*.

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commentary

Portraits of an age

Jonathan Keates

Le Portrait en Italie au Siècle de Tepolo
Petit Palais, Paris

Pompeo Batoni and his British Patrons
The Iveagh Bequest, Kenwood

In an age of reappraisals and rediscoveries the perimeters of eighteenth-century Italian painting for the modern enthusiast remain curiously limited and almost exclusively Venetian: Giambattista Tiepolo, Pietro Longhi, and a handful of redoubtable Enlightenment critics in Lombardy, Tuscany and Naples, while musicologists blow the dust off composers like Steffani, Leo and Duni, the rigid cultural orthodoxy which so often conceals laziness perpetuates the hoary idea of rococo Italy as a midden of supine absolutism. Its artists cynically pandering to the taste of half-fledged milords and glibble virtuosos.

Only gradually is the prospect changing. Italy's fervent regionalism has revived interest in such talented local artists as Sebastiano Conca, Giuseppe Maria Crespi and Fra Galgario and offered a memorable conspectus of achievement in shows like the Neapolitan exhibition of 1979-80. Scholarly attention has brought us monographs on Trevisani and Ceruti and the sadly incomplete studies of Batoni by the late Anthony Clark.

Yet if it still seems a bold stroke for the Petit Palais to devote an entire summer (the show lasts until September 5) to Italian eighteenth-century portraiture, the notion is triumphantly validated by the handsomeness and eclecticism of the display. This is a magnificent omnium gatherum, to the extent of squeezing in, on the verges of the exhibition, Montausi's glorious bust of Gian Gastone de' Medici, a tremendous marble blanchance, and Hayez's precociously romantic family group of 1807, whose presence the excellent catalogue by Marco Chiarini excuses by linking it with earlier Lombard-Venetian styles. There are, besides, several incursions which deliberately challenge our more rigid notions of what constitutes a portrait. Longhi's wax-doll children on horseback with their groom and Tiepolo's hauntingly satirical "Consilium in Arenis", its background throng of nobility mysteriously pared down to an exactly equal height from end to end of the canvas, invite a denser discussion of kinds and categories than Chiarini is ready to give.

Regional trends and schools are as emphatic as ever. Gaspara Traversi's "Pensant Girl" from Mantova is a sombre intruder among the maps and glosses of Neapolitan silk and brocade leading decorative weight to the swirling rhythms of Solimena and his followers. Bologna is dominated by Crespi's warty, bloated, jutting faces, their chilling expressionlessness heightened by the painter's glutinous brushwork. From Genoa a solitary Mulinaretti from the Palazzo Bianco simply whets the appetite. Best represented of all are, predictably, Venice, Lombardy and Rome. Alessandro Longhi's smirking, scarted growler is, here, as too are Tiepolo's Ashmolean girl with her parakeet and Rosalba's fluffy, fondant-soil pastels.

The joys of so encyclopaedic an approach are apparent from the start in the contrasts offered by the show's Lombard section. However particularized their likenesses, the figures in works by Ceruti and Fra Galgario are less obviously portraits than the components of an altogether broader scene. The one is as compassionate towards his peasant cronies and dour-looking priests as the other is mercilessly shrewd in his scrutiny of the grey-faced Bergamasque nobility, and each is

significantly preoccupied with the precise, definitive details of costume and accoutrement. The portrait, in these hands, is less a reproduction or an interpretation than a review in which both artist and sitter demand our judgment.

Blander parallels emerge in the treatment of the subjects themselves. Farinelli appears twice, which seems highly appropriate to an artist whose career was a paradigm of success. Jacopo Amigoni's touch is more subtly ironic: against an operatic drop-scene the castrato's porcine effeminacy is heightened by ambivalences of pose and costume, one ruffled hand stroking a Bologna lapdog, the other fingering a frothy air by Latilla. Solimena's pupil Corrado Giaquinto, smothering Farinelli in a monstrous confection of damask swags, cavoring putti and trumpet glitter, manages nevertheless to insinuate his own oddly censorious presence, as if reminding the star of his mortality.

The single Batoni *milord* in Paris, in typically nonchalant pose beside the Ludovisi Mars, is a harbinger of the sumptuous assembly now at Kenwood, with an outstandingly good catalogue by Edgar Peters Bowron and John Jacob. This was the finest of all eighteenth-century Italian portraits, and most of its subjects were English Grand Tourists. Needing two or three sittings and nearly always completing the portrait after the sitter left Rome, Batoni, for all his repetitions of

attitude and expression, defies stereotype with an extraordinary command of colour and line. His unmatched respect for surface lends meaning to the texture of a coat or the shades of a complexion, and each portrait is stamped with an authoritative sense of form. Thus the Barrett-Lennards, gazing at their dead daughter "with a kind of prophetic sorrow", as Horace Walpole described it, make a harmony of plunging diagonals, whereas Thomas Dundas, friend of the Prince of Wales, is given a jaunty, dancing angularity.

The predominant backgrounds are those designed to heighten our awareness of the travellers' perfections of taste. Ease is the keynote. We are not yet neo-classical, and the clustered antique marbles have a dusty pallor in sharp contrast with the vibrant modernity of Batoni's sitters, one at least (Sir Gregory Turner) shown symbolically holding down a map of Rome, the *milord* triumphant. Even Sir Humphrey Morice, sprawled at la Tischbein's Choeite, has a prospect of the Torre Leonina and Torre del Venti behind him. Most spectacular of all, however, is the huge "Colonel William Gordon" of 1766, where the painter brilliantly fuses his themes by turning his claymore-wielding warrior, against a stormy sky, into a Roman statue with Hunty tartan draperies, and thus splendidly encapsulates the shifting preoccupations of mid-century culture: Ossian in the Campagna.

Departing from Elysium

Peter Conrad

Orfeo ed Euridice
Glyndebourne Festival Opera

What holds Peter Hall's *Orfeo ed Euridice* together is the holding of hands. It's a production which insists on tactile values. When Amore swings down from that cerulean circus where the baroque gods disport, Orfeo, unable to accredit his good tidings, reaches out to touch his chubby legs, desperate to prove his reality and his trustworthiness. Then, at the gate of Hell, after Orfeo has lyrically pined for the furies, they repay him with some rounds of infernal callisthenics and, in earnest of their conversation, shake him solemnly by the hand. Euridice's arrival in Heaven is celebrated by another such manual rite. The blessed spirits press their palms against her and lock her into a frieze: Heaven is a society where, no longer needing to be content with the brief human record of the handshake, we are all literally incorporated in one another. On the troubled return to earth, the touch of a hand is the only juncture between Orfeo and Euridice, since he has been forbidden to look at her. But during the rejoicing which follows her rebirth, the messianic gliding of Heaven generalizes itself. A pediment of enskied gods is flown in to pass to the mortals a golden cord with which they bind one another. Knitted inside it, they have unobscuredly restored what they call the empire of love. The chorale flies through the auditorium, heralding the wailing with this connective fabric and gathering the unworthy audience into its blessing.

The production's occasion is the retirement from opera of Janet Baker, who sings Orfeo, but - remarkable as she is - the staging emphasizes consolidation, hand-holding mutuality, and team-work. On July 17 Janet Baker will spend her last twenty minutes on stage dancing not singing. Hall doesn't treat Orfeo as a tragic monodrama. Instead it's presented as a pastoral - and therefore a communal and eventually a resiliently comic - idyll. Like all pastorals, it's about rejection from an ideal garden; the foreboding and the reclamation of paradise.

Euridice at the beginning drifts away from the loved and familiar earth into the non-landscape of non-being. Her

death is her disappearance into a fog. Orfeo pursues her through a Hell which is a sublime and flaming phantasmagoria, a portcullis writhing with simian demons - in human and natural terms, another non-place. He finds her in a Heaven which is a beautiful and beatified earth. Like the landscape in which he mourns her at the beginning, Elysium is an enclosure of pines, except that here he's surrounded by solicitous rustics with native burial wreaths but by a race of physically perfected, eugenic spirits.

Euridice's revival promises the earth's own seasonal resurrection. The opera extends, after the trio of thanksgiving, into a pastoral epilogue - a long, contrived festivity with jigs, and a phallic maypole conjured out of the air with that versatile length of silk. Orfeo's personal conquest of despair is subsumed in an assertion of the consoling recurrence which is the rhythm of nature and also of comedy. Peter Hall ends his Orfeo, indeed, with a reprise of the superb *Midsummer Night's Dream* he staged at Glyndebourne last year. A ruddy harvest moon looms over the celebration, and children - some of them costumed with home-made wings of straw, in humble imitation of Amore - bring offerings of flowers and baskets of fruit. Gluck's classicism is vanquished by an agricultural festival from Shakespearean comedy. Hall has simultaneously elicited some of the anthropological and mythological in Orfeo and paid a fine compliment to Glyndebourne - for it too, even on a day of sultry clouds and vicious winds, is something of an earthly paradise; and it's a paradise which, if you can get a ticket, is seasonally reclaimable.

Instead of choreography, this Orfeo has movement (directed by Stuart Hoppa). Since Hall's intention is to represent the different societies of the opera's three realms, three different kinds of motion have been specified. Orfeo begins in inquiring immobility, prostrated as if himself near death. Janet Baker spends much of the first act hunched helplessly at the edge of the stage, the disabled leg beside her. The posture capitalizes on that extraordinary, patient stillness learned on the concert platform, not on the opera stage - which is one of Janet Baker's most transfixing qualities. When she played Monteverdi's Penelope, that stillness bespoke composure and calm certainty. Here it evinces inertia, an inability to comprehend

living. Her body curls up as if retracting into itself. When Euridice dies a second time, Janet Baker resumes that squatting position to sing "Che farò", except that now she's cradling the dead body in her arms. Thanks to this posture, which inside pagan mythology recalls a Christian pietà, the aria becomes - bewilderingly but movingly - somehow maternal, a grieving lullaby.

Once roused to recuperative motion of his own, Orfeo discovers a Hell of epileptic acrobats whose bodies are polymorphously entwined and a Heaven of suspended animation where statues sit gradually to life and, in time to Gluck's Elysian music, advance towards Euridice with an infinite graceful slowness. This jubilation on earth at the end has its own style of motion: vital, which Heaven no longer needs to be, yet without the dementia of the dances in Hell; the human body's enjoyment of its own suppleness and energy.

The only miscalculation in this homely Orfeo is the importation of the gods. Descending from the theatre's flies, they belong to some glittery astral jet set, garnished remote from their hempen mortal subjects. Amore in his pink dress on a platform of cut-out clouds has a Viennese cuteness. For the finale, Olympus itself dips down to hover over the earth, its sybaritic goddesses waving and beaming like celebrities at some gala affair; an Apollo discus hurls a new sun of gold paint salutes Orfeo. This trapezist sky suited Hall's Monteverdi and Cavalli productions at Glyndebourne, but his sober Orfeo won't counterbalance it. When the gods are tumbled back up to the heights, they do, however, leave behind them on the empty ramp a beautifully simple scenic image. Lying criss-crossed on the stage is that deflated skein of fabric which had bound all the characters, now dispersed, together like myth. It's the token and the memory of a time when gods walked with men and when men could attain (as Orfeo does) god-like powers.

Though the production is no inferentially vehicle for Janet Baker, it's inevitably dominated by her. Her voice has always had an aptness for elegy. If most eloquent when taking its leave of a lover in Wagner, it's at its most affecting, since it's about the characters' enforced reputation of

Buridice and the singer's voluntary abandonment of the stage. Yet Janet Baker never invites a sentimental commiseration, and after her opening cries of rage and pain she lightens that grave voice for the optimistic virtuoso laughter of "Addio, miei sospiri". For her valediction she has made the selfless choice of an opera with a happy ending, which refuses to mourn.

Next year will see the centenary and due celebrations of the birth of Lord Berners (1883-1950), the composer, author and painter (Britain being Britain's only other peer of musical note). An essential preliminary has been the recent publication of *The Collected Music for Solo Piano and The Collected Vocal Music* in a meticulously researched edition by Peter Dickinson, with a foreword by Sir John Betjeman (£14.50 and £15.95, Chester Music). The songs include settings of Helios ("Du bist wie eine Blume" addressed to a white pig, among them) and Gertrude Stein, as well as Berners's own verses praising red noses to red roses. Stravinsky admired the composer's gifts and was the dedicatee of the piano piece "Le poisson d'or".

The Enchanted Ring The Conquest of Penicillin by John Sheehan

FOREWORD BY SIR JOHN ABRAHAM
The Enchanted Ring begins with the discovery of penicillin in 1928 and follows the trail through Chain, Abraham and others, through the first successful clinical tests of the new drug against bacterial infections. By 1945 there was a plentiful supply of the "enchanted ring" of the penicillin exact structure for synthetic. After many false starts and dead ends, new chemical techniques and the achievement of the discovery of the overall story of the discovery of penicillin.

John Sheehan is Professor of Chemistry at MIT. Published by MIT Press, 125 Broadway, New York, NY 10038.

Adventures in La Mancha

Gerry Ashton

Don Quixote
Olivier Theatre

It goes almost without saying that it is impossible to dramatize a novel, and when the novel is *Don Quixote* there are special problems. In the novel Cervantes depicts himself as finding a continuation of the unfinished *Annals of La Mancha* which he has been reading. Unfortunately the continuation is the work of a Moorish (and therefore untrustworthy) scribe, Cide Hamete Benengeli. Don Quixote's second series of adventures is embarked on when he hears of the public's reaction to his first, which have appeared in print. The duplicitous Moorish chronicler increasingly adds his own comments and this is reported to Cervantes by the Moor he has hired to translate the text. For readers a great deal of the fun of *Don Quixote* is to be found in this textual game, and no stage production could hope to approach it. Nor can the stage production convey the character-development of Don Quixote and Sancho which is revealed to us in the discourse and arguments which are spread about the book. The slapstick humour, of which there is a great deal in the novel, must clearly be the *matra prima* of any dramatic version.

Keith Dewhurst makes a wise choice in basing his version on Shelton's seventeenth-century translation, and for the most part those scenes where

the talents of the company can be shown at their best have been used by the director Bill Bryden. The windmills are there, of course, with brilliant light effects providing the moving sails, as is the puppet show of Master Peter, and Sancho's government of the island of Barataria. Stepping outside the scenes of rumbustious fun, slapstick and pageantry, we are also offered a Cave of Montesinos episode into which the demon of Cervantine criticism has crept - the crazy knight is once again the Knight of the Sorrowful Countenance, but this time because he glimpses the horrors of Spain's violent future history. A tableau representing Goya's "Third of May 1808", followed by the croaking birds that emerge from the cave in the original - transformed into fascist aeroplanes (at Guernica?) - culminates in a flag-waving Republican Civil War song. It is a lapse of taste in what is generally an entertaining and worthy production, and could be omitted without any damage to its overall effectiveness.

Apart from this the choice of incident is wise, though perhaps the dubbing of Don Quixote as knight would have served best to introduce us to the madness of Alonso Quixano and its cause; certainly this would have been more fun than the confused and clumsy brawl in the inn. The Pastoral Arcadia of Part Two, while being beautiful to look at, also lengthens the production unnecessarily. A jocular start to Part One and a good deal of dull and not very intelligible conversation with the galley slaves are simply made up for by what is an almost totally successful Part Two. The confrontation with the rather tired lions, the puppet show and

the scenes in Barataria are all superbly balanced.

At times Paul Scofield's lanky figure offers us in profile and shadow the Quixotes of Picasso, Doré and Goya, and his old man's voice has just the right sound, especially at the end of the First Part when Quixote returns home ignominiously encaged. Both Quixote and Sancho sit astride tricycles - a wonderful and convincing substitute for their steeds, Quixote aloft on a tall lean penny two farthings and the admirable Sancho (Tony Haygarth) on an endearing chubby-tyred vehicle. The tricycles and the sheep on roller skates whom Quixote mistakes for armies are ingenious solutions.

Music plays a greater role in this production than most - a mixture of genuine Spanish David Munn style, Catalan *sardanas*, Steeleye Span and John Stanley, it is all superbly well performed, very loud and thrilling. But the variety of it is distracting, and some of the English lyrics trite: "Señor, señor / Can you tell me where we're headin' / Paradise or Armageddon?" The talent at the director's disposal is of the best, but to be the real unifier of this energetic pantomime the music ought to be more homogeneous in style.

This production lasts nearly three hours, and the author and director are attempting what is really impossible. It is greatly to their credit and to that of the company that there is not much here to vex either the reader of Cervantes or the theatre-goer expecting to see the usual high standard of production of Bill Bryden. The episodic nature of this play means that he can cut and add, and this reviewer hopes he will.

Surviving

John Hope Mason

Aunt Mary
Warehouse Theatre

Pam Gems writes about survival. According to her there are two essential elements that enable someone to survive. The first is the realization that there is no one else who can decide or act for you. This is the lesson Descartes teaches Christina in *Queen Christina*, and which Fish preaches (in terms of Rosa Luxembourg's argument with Lenin) in *Dusa, Fish and Vi*. The theme is treated most explicitly in the brilliant one-act play *Franz into April*. The second element is a matter of being open-eyed, realistic; pay attention to what you are, to what is here. Whatever you are, do justice to yourself fully, but stay within the limits of yourself that exist. A perfect example of this was Edith Piaf, who in Gems's play *Piaf* demonstrates another quality which relates to the business of survival - a tremendous zestful energy.

A world in which everyone chose anarchy. In her new play, *Aunt Mary*, Gems depicts just such a world. Her central preoccupations and her earthy, downbeat sense of humour have here combined to produce an extraordinary and characteristic comedy. The play is set in a West Bromwich filling-station owned by two transvestite writers who have a passion for theatre. They work and live at the filling-station in order to preserve their anonymity; under pseudonyms they write books of all kinds from romantic fiction to "heavy-metal Marxism", and these pay for performances at the tiny theatre at the back of the filling-station. This way of life is satisfying not only for them but for others too, among them a young would-be poet.

The poet has an affair with an attractive television producer, Alison, and brings her to the garage. When she learns that several of the country's best-selling authors are in fact living as two transvestites, running a petrol-station, she sees the opportunity of a lifetime, the television programme of the decade. One of the men, Aunt Mary (played with superb gravity by Alfred Marks), takes a fancy to Alison, and his infidelity leads the other man to attempt suicide. The unique way of life they have devised is on the verge of collapse. At this point, however, they each realize that for all its faults, it is their world. They reject the television offer that would bring fame and wealth. By protecting their West Bromwich anonymity they will survive on their own terms, valuing the things that matter most.

This summary suggests a more coherent experience than the play actually gives, both because of its anarchic nature, and because of certain problems in the performances. The condensed way in which Gems writes creates difficulties which not all the cast overcome. But Robert Walker's production and David Felding's designs are wonderfully successful in realizing the invention and bravura with which the play has been written. To see Alfred Marks's first appearance, standing next to the petrol pumps, in front of a massive advertisement for a new car, wearing a schoolgirl's dress of sky blue gingham, pink glitter high-heeled shoes, and his hair in bunches, is like seeing a cliché from a new angle: we have been here before, but never quite like this.

What is most notable about the play is that this invention is not the product of an imagination that is out of gear. It belongs to an exceptionally broad and unselfconscious temperament. The world which may be benevolent but can be tolerant, her characters survive by being energetic, frank, and bold. The result is invigorating theatre.

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Winchester College Sixth-Century Essays Edited by Roger Cusance

This is a collection of fifteen original essays commissioned by the Warden and Fellows to celebrate the college's sixth centenary in 1982. They range widely in time and subject matter from Anglo-Saxon charters to the problem of school discipline in the Victorian era, from Wycliffe's unique contribution to Catholicism in the sixteenth century to the no less distinctive part they have played in the modern Labour Party. Illustrated £20

Laurence Oliphant 1829-1888

Anne Taylor

There was no stranger man than Laurence Oliphant in the whole Victorian era, writes Anne Taylor. Few, after reading his biography, would dare to dispute the claim. Traveller, writer, diplomat, wit, secret agent, entrepreneur, and mystic, Oliphant's life was full of interest and achievement. He is little known today, and this fascinating biography presents him to a new public. Illustrated £12.50

Oxford University Press

Julie Kavanagh

Vaslav had other reasons for bearing a grudge against his father. About eight years earlier, Thomas Nijnsky had left his wife and children for another dancer. Though nomadic and

The role of Nijinsky's sister is one she assumes as readily in print as she did in life, when she would find herself being interpreted in relation to people's response to her brother. (Fokine, for example, once interrupted a class at the Imperial) and breathlessly congratulated Bronislava on having

Bronislava Nijinska in Danse Polovetsiennes from Borodin's Prince Igor; a photographic portrait taken in London, 1912, reproduced from the book reviewed here.

takes on a mawkish tinge, and we get Nijinsky's great leaps compared to "puffs of wind"; his slow walks on stage to "heavy tears". Rhapsodic, rhetorical impressions of Nijinsky abound. What gives Nijinsky's book its special edge are the passages of critical, step-by-step analysis of her brother's dancing.

She had less difficulty with the role of the Chosen Maiden in *Sacre du Printemps*, having witnessed Vaslav's initial sessions with the pianist who had to decipher and transpose Stravinsky's hand-written orchestral score, and thus having gradually assimilated its notorious syncopated polyrhythms. Nijinska needed only two rehearsals with her brother to create the solo. Not so the rest of the cast. Accustomed to

and philologist. Chalapat was Bronislava's first, and this autobiography suggests, her only real love. Her account of their intense platonic relationship is poignantly related. Anna Kisselgoff, who wrote the introduction to the book, says its emotional range has the breadth of a Russian novel. This is not an exaggeration. Nijtka's soaring love for Chalapat, together with the physical and emotive story of her family's lives, juxtaposed with the threat of a cancer's day-to-day dog and its compensatory, epiphanic rewards on stage give her autobiography a veritable composite universality and open it up to a much less specialized audience.

Getting

Alec Cairns

DAN P. SILVER

Reconstructing the
Great War
347pp. Harvard
£17.50
0 764 75025 X

This is largely the
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It is not surprising that in these circumstances efforts should have been made to seek cancellation of foreign indebtedness and to pass the burden of repayment to Germany in the form of reparations. It is also not altogether surprising that the main creditor, the United States, should have insisted on the funding of wartime debts and declined to engage in further inter-governmental lending. The United Kingdom, although it emerged from the war as large a creditor as the United States, had little expectation of repaying its debts and was naturally America's largest debtor. It was too weak, therefore, to do much to help European reconstruction from its own resources.

But a great deal of the picture is left almost entirely blank. The dealings of the two main countries with one another and with the United States are recounted in full detail. Germany is given some prominence in one chapter and Russia in another. But there is no proper discussion of the *European* reconstruction to which the title of the book refers. We are told very little about the general economic background and its development over time. Since the situation changed rapidly from year to year, what was said and done has to be related to the stage that had been reached in post-war recovery. But the statistical framework that would help the reader to do this is missing. There is little tabular matter to refer to, practically no indication of the movement through time of production, trade, credit or prices, not even some guidance as to appropriate rates of exchange between the various currencies—pounds, dollars, francs and marks—whose values are expressed. In short, this is economic history for historians not for economists.

A more important weakness is that we are rarely allowed to look back before 1919 or forward to the years after 1923. We are never told what came of it in the end. But what judgment is possible of, say, attitudes or reparations if all one is told begins in May 1921 with the London Schedule of Payments and ends with casual references to the Dawes Plan of 1924?

Professor Silverman asks for a reconsideration of French policy and has difficulty in demonstrating that if France was intransigent over reparations, the United States was completely obstinate over inter-allied debts. He is no doubt right to insist that France had many of the same problems and much the same reactions to them as other countries. But it is going a little far, given the state of intellectual confusion he describes, to argue that French policy was "completely rational" and reflected an "unbending dedication to national interest". Britain and America are accused of trying to impose some "Anglo-Saxon economic orthodoxy" on French unbelievers when "French economic theory and policy was in some respects more progressive than that of Britain and the United States". There are no charges that the book substantiates. On the contrary, it simply confirms the Keynesian criticism of French policy from Keynes onwards, that it was altogether lacking in realism.

There was an equal air of unreality in the talk of restoring the pre-war parity of the franc on grounds of "honour and justice" when it had already lost over half its value against the dollar. Another, more extreme, example is the balancing of the French budget in two successive years by votes in favour of a higher forecast of revenue.

As for Anglo-Saxon orthodoxy, it would seem that the views of French bankers and economists differed much the same scatter as those of their British colleagues. But whether that was so or not, the policies actually adopted were not the fruit of some coherent theory and were governed more by events and political pressures than by doctrine. At times Professor Silverman seems to share this view but then he says that he attributes the inability of "responsible" economists to "act decisively" to the state of turmoil in economic theory. "Economic crisis," he suggests without defining any of his terms, "cannot be managed in the absence of a viable economic theory." An entire chapter is devoted to a supposed "Crisis in Economic Theory" without making very clear what the crisis was, in what way it affected the world, or what advances in economic theory resulted. As he has told us in the traditional theory did not fit the facts, the disintegration of the international economic system or provide answers to a number of unanswerable questions.

The nub of the matter was what was to be done about Germany. France cared for her security and had no great

wish to see Germany recover even if her claims to reparations required just such a recovery. Britain and the United States saw in the economic recovery of Germany the key to European reconstruction. Keynes had pronounced that view in 1919 and was more emphatic after the Second World War demonstrated how right he was. But there was no doubt that Germany would recover, unaided if France's unrealistic claims to reparations were enforced under threat of military invasion. France herself, on the other hand, seems to have recovered rapidly from the war in spite of the various crises in her affairs; by 1924, we are told (almost incidentally), French exports were already back to their pre-war level (while British exports were still 25 per cent lower). It is not very convincing, therefore, to argue that Anglo-American policy put Germany's recovery ahead of France's. France received little help from either of her allies; but it was help to Germany that was most needed for European reconstruction.

No doubt it would have been better had the state been wiped clean of international indebtedness in 1914; if reparations had been limited to £100 million a year, or if, failing agreement on those lines, the Treasury had accepted Blackett's bold proposal in 1920 for unilateral cancellation by the British government of the foreign debts owed to it. Perhaps also it would have been better for Britain if she had had a dose of inflation like France, sufficient to put out of court a return to gold at the old parity and enough also to lighten the burden of domestic debt by the "casual bankruptcy" of which the French disapproved so strongly in principle while engaging in it in practice. It would certainly have been better if the United States government had taken a more generous line, and been less anxious to make way for the commercial banks. But the burden of debt was not insupportable so long as world trade continued to expand. What was fatal was the combination of indebtedness, especially international indebtedness, and the unforeseen, calamitous depression that began in

national growth theory is particularly irritating to applied economists, who want to understand particular economies grow, and all too often find that the theory of all too weak and generally unhelpful. Economies can be made to grow faster. Particularly in the case of the Third World, it is a bewildering task to the man in the street to be told that her economic success must be explained in terms of the relationship between the savings ratio and the rate of interest, or the ready supply of labour to industry, or the investment capital output ratio. It is obvious, if not therefore true, that the fundamental forces of a country's cultural and historical kind must be taken into account. The oddest aspect of this is not its scale, but its

of the same Bible created quite different economic results in Protestant, as compared with Catholic, Europe. But the major part of the book is devoted to showing how Japanese Confucianism provided such an extraordinarily fertile ground for the adaptation and development of the Western scientific ideas despite centuries of isolationism and technological neglect.

Morishima's narrative emphasizes yet again the extraordinary differences between what has made Japan successful, and the way in which England came to prosperity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For example, Tawney's major doctrine that for England "Religion has been converted from the keystone which

holds together the social edifice into one department within it, and the idea of a rule of right is replaced by economic expediency as the arbiter of policy and criterion of conduct" is doubly irrelevant to the economic development of Japan. As Morishima says, "a flexible combination of . . . three ethical systems and not a single religion has contributed to Japan's cultural and economic development". There was no central set of religious beliefs in Japan which had to be deposited before economic ambition could be given its head.

More significantly, economic expediency was not, for it is now, the motor of Japanese economic progress. In England "Entrepreneurism" came to consider their own profit making as an occupation which carried out a mission given to them by God". It remains one of the oddities of modern Japan that profit-making is neither in fact nor in ideology a critical part of what business and commerce are for. The Meiji revolution was not, as was often claimed, brought about by the bourgeoisie. It was the merchant classes who provided a ready-made of entrepreneurs and industrialists. There were indeed merchants, and prosperous ones; but "They had no sense of an obligation to make Japan a modern state by founding in Japan such businesses as railways, telegraphs, shipbuilding and steel manufacturing". The state had to create industry deliberately, and on a large scale, and they had to man it, at least in the early years, with the

...businessmen, aware that "apart from making money, they must do something" for society and the country.¹ Feudal stipends were ended in the 1870s by computation into single lump-sum payments. The lords and warriors who were so enriched put their money into industry, but with

motives very different from those of sixteenth-century English merchants. They "... had a comparatively clear perception of what was in the national interest, but they had no idea of the profitability of individual industries - especially considered in the short term"

This method of founding a modern economy is almost laughably uncomprehensible to a conventional Western reader brought up on notions of free professional management and profitability are the key to individual wealth and public prosperity. What should the poor British do to emulate Japanese success? We would have to, like the Japanese, play down individualism and liberalism which have become simply obstacles to law and order. The term "economic development" cannot be achieved so long as entrepreneurs possess the character of autonomy and independence. sheer imitation would lead to some curious conclusions; for instance coal-miners might galvanize the economy of Wales if they were paid off from their uneconomic employment and then, in the manner of the rural workers who were compensated for their unearned income, invested their money in large-scale enterprises based on Japanese technique.

Mortshimer refers to Sir John Hicks's *Theory of Economic History*, which accents the early emergence of the market economy from systems of custom and command. It is plain that the staggering economic success of Japan has taken place without the market, in any proper Anglo-Saxon sense, ever really taking root. "The force mechanism is merely played an important role" in the early days. Such is fundamental (to Western eyes) economic force, particularly irrelevant in the labour market. Even in Britain it is hard to analyse wages and the allocation of labour.

supply and demand of the orthodox kind; there are too many hopes, fears and prejudices at work to be dismissed as mere matters of taste or institutional obstruction. But in Japan the notion of a labour market is quite out of place, particularly in the leading companies. In this sort of society . . . there can be little concept of the labour contract in the Western sense. Labour is not regarded as a high class commodity; it is the spirit of loyalty which is prized.

It is patronizing, and inaccurate, to believe that the Japanese economy will or should converge on the Anglo-American model. W. W. Rostow's *"Succeeded?"* shows clearly that the distinctive features of Japanese society are not only linked very closely with her success, but have been efficient in achieving it. The apparently disturbing fact that "Japanese capitalism was - and is - nationalistic, paternalistic and anti-individualistic" may in fact be a cause for self-satisfaction; and it is certainly not just the self-deprecating question-mark which Morishima's title raises doubts about whether Japan is really successful.

It is a great joy to find a book by a theorist, an economist bold enough to suggest, in his own words, that "it is erroneous to assume unconditionally that one can construct an economic model in the abstract and apply the logic of the model to the realities of a country". His analysis is admirable for the range of its insights and the modesty of its conclusions: It confirms again the necessity for, and richness of, explanations of economic behaviour in terms of political theory and social change. With any luck Professor Makhlis will return to this subject at great leisure: It is all much more interesting than the theory of economic growth. Or perhaps it is the theory of economic



Due to determinism

A. D. Nuttall

PHILIP DREW

The Meaning of Freedom
489pp. Aberdeen University Press.
£18.50.
0 08 025743 7

Before one opens Philip Drew's *The Meaning of Freedom* one sees on the dust-jacket Delacroix's picture of Liberty rallying the people. That firmly planted left foot with its Raphaelesque ankle, the half-turned torso, leaning with wind-blown garments into the future, is reminiscent of a line of older figures of Fortune ruling the world. Such is the power of determinism upon our minds. Even concepts formed in opposition to the very idea of determinism are gradually transformed into ruling goddesses. Those sceptical Greeks who said the world was ruled not by fate but chance were soon (perhaps because of that trenchant "ruled") building temples to chance.

Professor Drew begins by sketching the elementary conflict between free will and determinism and then launches himself upon the history of English literature, viewed in the light of this perennial conflict. The list of authors treated is a long one: Chaucer, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Milton, Swift, Pope, Wordsworth, Shelley, Byron, Tennyson, Arnold, Hardy, Eliot (George), Dickens, Wilde, Huxley, Koestler, Orwell and, from French literature, Gide, Genet, Becker, and, incidentally, treated not as examples of cultural or economic determinism but as cognitive investigators. Indeed the list is too long, for each person in it receives only summary justice. Something is badly wrong when, in a substantial work addressing the problem of free will, Faustus's lines on the "wages of sin" are blandly summed

up with the phrase, "Divinity tells him that the life of man is subject to universal law." Marlowe had his hero quote only fragments of Scripture to construct his paralyzing syllogism: "The reward of sin is death," "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves," "we must die an everlasting death." Faustus's first premise continues, in Romans 6 (Geneva Bible), "but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord" and his second continues (in 1 John, 1), "If we acknowledge our sins he is faithful and just, to forgive us our sinnes." So true divinity may not teach what Faustus says. But then Marlowe was writing in an age dominated by Calvin. Redemption is by Grace alone and Grace is never earned by merely human effort. If Faustus is not receiving Grace then, after all, the words he left unquoted are irrelevant to his case and his inference (as far as his own situation goes) is once more impeccable. At this point real thought and real criticism might begin.

Sometimes Drew simply gets things wrong. He thinks Pope in his *Essay on Man* embraced Newtonian mechanism, and a "withdrawn and abstracted" God. Yet Pope's God "blossoms in the trees, lives through all life" and "breathes in our soul". If that is not an organically immanent God, I do not know what is. Hume's sceptical critique of the substantial ego is seen as no more than an expression of the eighteenth-century preference for stable, social harmony; this, of the philosopher who dissolved God, the external world and the self into a flux of perceptions. When Hume, in the later books of the *Treatise*, tried to make good the ravages of scepticism, he appealed not to social harmony but, as Kemp Smith has shown, to the profoundly Romantic doctrine of the constitutive imagination.

Most fundamental, for readers of literature, is the distinction between

extra-human and psychic determinism. Drew draws this distinction but seems never to have it to hand when it is needed. He cites Whitehead's account of un-freedom as consisting in those harsh aspects of nature which frustrate the purposes of human beings. Here the universe is an arena in which a genuine freedom may put up some sort of fight. But then there is the doctrine that every event, in so far as it is caused or motivated (and all events are) is predetermined; by this second view the very struggle of man against his environment is itself determined, so that the apparent contest between freedom and necessity vanishes and we are left with a mere unmeaning discord of colliding causal sequences. This distinction should have been far more firmly applied in Drew's analysis of Hardy, who oscillates between the conception of a tragically defeated freedom and a sense that freedom was always an illusion. A common pattern in more severely fatalistic works like Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* is the gradual replacement of the first conception by the second. The last part of the book deals with the oppression of female aspirations as described by George Eliot and with various accounts of the crushing of the human spirit by totalitarian power. All these are, very clearly, studies of the possible assaults on freedom rather than assertions of its unreality. It is true that Orwell's *O'Brien* in 1984 succeeds in controlling the inmost impulses of Winston Smith, but this is still seen as a bizarre and artificial violation. The world is not naturally thus.

But *The Meaning of Freedom* is a marvellous quarry; the stones lie in heaps for the taking. Even where Drew's analysis is wanting, the material begins to arrange itself. His local perceptions are often shrewd. He demonstrates very neatly that *The Picture of Dorian Gray* has a deeply conventional moral (almost "The Perils of Self-Abuse"). His final

treatment of the philosophical problem is both intelligent and subtle. In general, however, Drew is too easily persuaded that logical necessity and the presence of motive erode freedom. In his discussion of Chaucer he is quick to reject the Boethian theology which grants that God's foreknowledge entails the occurrence of certain events but denies that it constrains them to occur. But Boethius's point has real power. As I write I can see another person writing. My knowledge entails that she should be writing but does not compel her to do so. Nothing so far has ruled out the possibility that she is writing freely and that that is what I know. Similarly, if it is true (now) that I will lunch tomorrow at one I cannot lunch at any other time. But this is entailment, not constraint. Drew softens towards this important truth when he grants that statistical generalizations become (coercive) "laws" only by a highly misleading metaphor (we are now back to Delacroix's "Liberty").

But in general he resists and thus, for example, concludes that Milton's Adam was not free to stand or fall. He

sets out as "a cruel antinomy" the following: A free man is one who does what he most wants to do. An un-free man is one who does what he has to do. Every man has to do what he most wants to do. But this is not so cruel, because the last sentence is inwardly weak. At first sight it is just false. Presumably Drew means that we are pre-set to want certain things. But this does not abolish freedom. Biologically we need to eat, and though we cannot opt out from the need we can and often do choose to eat. All purposive activity must have a context. Without needs and wishes the action would collapse into mere random action. Similarly, conditioning is not necessarily coercive. A good university actually rewards originality. This Darwinian universe has elicited and lavishly rewarded cognitive intelligence. Meanwhile the attempt to show that we are logically constrained by our natures collapses into the trivial tautology, "We are what we are", which has exactly as much force, and as little, as "What will be, will be".

Pleasing the public

Stanley Weintraub

JAMES M. BROWN

Dickens: Novelist in the Market-Place
180pp. Macmillan. £15.
0 333 30083 1

The clash between artistic integrity and market considerations is as old as commercial publishing. James Brown's book, despite its title, wavers between considering Dickens's compromises with his readership and his novelising of Victorian society itself as a market-place. Although the study oscillates between concepts, some useful perspectives emerge.

"At all times", Brown insists early in the book, "the novels will be considered in their own right and will be kept separate from Dickens's own journalism, letters and speeches. These will not be used to provide 'background' information, or to help elucidate difficult passages, or to justify critical arguments which cannot be supported from the text." Fortunately, Brown forgets such rigidities when the need occurs for the resonances which documentary corroboration furnishes. These impulsive utterances, penned without art or commerce in mind, mirror Dickens's actual state of mind as the novels were being turned out. For example, Dickens would write, pessimistically, to a friend, "As to the suffrage, I have lost hope even in the ballot. We appear . . . to have proved the failure of representative institutions without an educated and advanced people to support them." And a year before Dickens wrote *Black House*, we discover that he had insisted that without improvements in housing and sanitation, "those classes of people which increase the fastest, made so miserable, as to bear within themselves the certain seeds of ruin to the whole community".

The threat Brown reads in this is revolution; and he propounds the interesting thesis that the 1859 romance of the French Revolution, *A Tale of Two Cities*, usually dismissed as lacking the social vision of the other later novels, utilizes "the distancing medium of an historical melodrama" to examine the condition of contemporary mid-Victorian England and to explore "one of the possible consequences of that condition".

Nevertheless, Brown admits, the English working class resembled the passive sufferers of Bleeding Heart Yard more than the liberators of the Bastille. As in *Little Dorrit*, *Our Mutual Friend* and *Black House*, the sinister and corrupting power of money motivates much of the action of *A Tale of Two Cities*, which has its symbol, the metaphorical Chancery office, the Circumlocution Office, the respectable and prosperous - but ominous - Telford's Bank. Yet even here Dickens's essential conservatism

emerges in his failure to offer a single word about the mob "that might suggest that revolution is either constructive or beneficial".

Certain other social facts were unacceptable in undiluted form as reading matter for the Victorian public. Both religion and sexuality were so spared, and Brown observes that such artistic delicacies were hardly imposed upon Dickens against his will, since his statements outside his fiction were often consistent with the most conservative elements of contemporary taste and propriety. An example he notes is Dickens's dislike against John Millais's gentle but unsentimental depiction of the young Jesus in the house of his parents, "The Carpenter's Shop", painted according to the tenets of Pre-Raphaelite realism. Hysterically, Dickens declared that the characters were "hideous" and had come from the "gutter" - that "Wherever it is possible to express ugliness of feature, limb or attitude, you have it expressed." When it came to money and money values, however, Dickens's outrage usually - but not always - emerged unadorned by anything but the needs of fictional art.

Although Brown never says so explicitly, his *Novelist in the Market-Place* demonstrates how much Dickens tried to have it both ways. As magazine editor as late as 1858, Dickens wanted a member of his staff, "I particularly wish you to look well to Wilkie's article . . . and not leave anything in it that may be sweeping, and unnecessarily offensive to the middle-class." And to a contributor of a piece of fiction he wrote, "I particularly entreat you to consider the catastrophe. You write to be read, of course." Yet in his mature novels Dickens repudiated the contemporary English social system in which relations of exchange value predominated, while being lionized by those in society who made his novels remunerative commodities. The pervasive images of his fiction condemned a society where everyday social relations, even friendship and marriage, were "degraded into a form of economic speculation". As Rigaud Blandos asks Arthur Cleggman in *Little Dorrit*, "How do you live? How do you come here? Have you sold - or bought? . . . Society sells itself and sells me; and I sell Society."

Still, even while Pip's moral growth in *Great Expectations* was being dramatized by his increasing awareness of values which cannot be measured in equivalent money terms, Dickens was busy altering the ending as a concession to his purchasing public, something he would do more than once. His vision of the market-place shaped the nature of his world artistic creation, his work, making him the first great novelist of the city and its alienated denizens. However, Dickens was himself confused by its ethics, victim as well as critic of its social contradictions.

JOSEF WILCZYNSKI

An Encyclopedic Dictionary of Marxism, Socialism and Communism
600pp. Macmillan. £25.
0 333 30689 9

Josef Wilczynski's *Encyclopedic Dictionary* is an extraordinary document. Its relation to Marxism or socialism, as these are understood in the West, is marginal, and its claims to be "encyclopedic" must be discounted. Virtually no Marxist thinker is mentioned who has not received recognition or criticism from the Chinese or Soviet Communist Parties, and all the theories and events discussed belong to the "heroic" stage of Marxist revolution in the present century. Gramsci is not mentioned, nor are any of the influential French Marxists (Goldmann, Althusser, Lefebvre, etc) of the post-war period. Almost every definition is brought back to a tired old slogan from revolutionary rhetoric - the "class struggle", "the dictatorship of the proletariat", "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need". Neo-Marxism is discussed as though it were entirely a product of US campus frolics in the 1960s, and the influential re-discovery of Hegel by Western Marxists might just as well never have occurred, despite the fact that everything suggestive in modern Marxism - the theory of alienated labour, the analysis of class consciousness, the distinction between civil society and state, etc - derives from Hegel.

The Marxian doctrines which are referred to are the materialist theory of history (interpreted throughout as "dialectical materialism", despite the fact that Marx did not use that label, and despite the fact that the "dialectic" is demonstrably wrong), the theory of class struggle, and the labour theory of value. Since all these theories have been refuted it is not surprising to find oneself losing patience with the definitions that are built on them, and the constant reminder that they form part of a liturgy that our fellow intellectuals in, therefore, a dictionary are forced to repeat in all their public announcements, enables one to continue reading, although with mounting horror at the extent of human folly.

Land and contents

Peter Frank

ARCHIE BROWN, JOHN FENNELL,
MICHAEL KAGER and
R. T. WILLETTTS (Editors)

The Cambridge Encyclopedia of
Russia and the Soviet Union
920p. Cambridge University Press.
£18.50.
0 521 23169 8

With four such distinguished editors, and with a list of contributors that reads like a "Who's Who?" of Russian and Soviet studies, one expects a great deal from this publication. And expectation is amply justified: it is a first-class encyclopedia, an excellent introduction to Russia and the Soviet Union - to the land, its people, its political and social systems, and to its art, science and culture in all their variety. The editors have eschewed the conventional alphabetical listing and have arranged the entries according to topic and theme.

The contents are set out under seven main headings. These range from "Territory and Population" through "History", "Religion", "Art and Architecture", "Soviet Society", "The World Role of the Soviet Union". Each main section contains sub-sections, so that, for example, under "Language and Literature" there are sub-headings: "History of the Language" and so on to "Post-Revolutionary Russian Literature". Each sub-section is both an entry in itself and at the same time a component in the overall picture; the whole work is successfully knitted

together by a system of cross-referencing and, more importantly, by the carefully thought-out and effective sequence in which the sections are arranged. There is an extensive index (placed at the front of the book).

To test the quality of the contents, I began by consulting those sections corresponding to my own field of specialization (politics and society). Here the entries give a lucid, compressed but not cryptic account. No specialist could complain of any serious omission and the treatment is, on the whole, well-balanced. The section on the Soviet political system is most satisfactory; that on the country's social system is good, but leans, perhaps, too much towards the official Soviet interpretation and would have benefited from a more evaluative approach.

The encyclopedia is copiously illustrated (in both monochrome and colour), and nowhere to better effect than in the section on art and architecture; here the elegant and economically written entries are embellished with beautiful reproductions of photographs of buildings, artifacts, icons, paintings, etc. Particularly interesting are the sections on twentieth-century arts in the non-Russian republics, and the contemporary art: the alternative tradition.

There are also equally satisfactory and comprehensive sections on "Music, Theatre, Dance and Film", "The Sciences", "Soviet Society", "Economy", and "Military Power and Policy". This is a book which can be recommended without reservation to specialist, student and ordinary reader alike.

The liturgy of the left

Roger Scruton

If Marxism fares badly, socialism fares worse. "Socialism" is throughout taken as a technical term of the Marxian theory of history - to denote that system of production relations which supposedly follows on capitalism, and which precedes the final withering away of the state and the emergence of "full communism." In the West, however, the term is not used in that way, and indeed most people who call themselves socialists do so in order to distance themselves from the Marxian theory, either because they recognize that the state is necessary to their aims, or because they believe that the Marxian theory has been refuted. It is extraordinary to find Wilczynski constantly deferring to the myth of "full communism" without any hint of irony. "According to a prediction of N. S. Krushchev in 1961", he writes, "the phase of socialism in the USSR (the oldest socialist country) would last up to 1980 at least, (after which the country would start entering the phase of full communism). But owing to the Soviet economic setbacks since that time, the socialist phase will in fact be much longer." The idea that socialism might exist, both as theory and practice, outside the Marxian rhetoric, does not seem to have occurred to Wilczynski. All the intellectual labour that went into the making of modern English socialism, for example - the historical analyses of Tawney, Cole, and E. P. Thompson, the social criticism of the New Left, the political theories of the Fabians, the Webbs, Russell, Crosland, and many more - none of this gets more than a casual mention. Admittedly much of it, with hindsight, appears intellectually dubious. But that is clearly not Wilczynski's criterion for exclusion, since he treats us to the thoughts (or rather slogans) of half the Chinese revolutionaries, and to the theories of every half-baked schoolboy who puts up his hand at some International, then to enter history as revisionist, opportunist, deviationist, or whatever.

The explanation of this bias must lie in the fact that Wilczynski, although now apparently residing in Austria, did much of his research in Poland, the land of the *solidarnosc* movement, of Marxism, or of socialism, but of official Communist rhetoric. Read as such, it is a remarkable and in some ways impressive document: impressive

for its unscholarly thoroughness, and remarkable for the deadpan tone which it succeeds in maintaining over 660 pages of double columned text. Not that Wilczynski entirely swallows the party line. He allows himself a few criticisms of Soviet tyranny, and even hints that some fairly disreputable things might occasionally have occurred in China. On the whole, however, he represents his dictionary entries as parts of a believable system of thought, applicable in the contemporary world, delivering definite answers to definite questions. It is difficult to know whether the work is one of propaganda and subversion, although the illuminating definition of "enrichment" as "boring from within" suggests that it might be. We are told that in socialist countries other than the Soviet Union collectivization has been "more or less voluntary or has at least been carried out more humanely." (Admittedly it could not have been carried out less humanely.) Likewise, in socialist countries the provision of social welfare is as of right, and all need has therefore been eliminated; besides, there is more or less permanent full employment, so that the problem of welfare seldom in fact arises. (It is of course difficult to know the facts. We know that you lose your right to welfare in Poland if you do not find a job within six months, and that you will not find a job if the Party wants you to lose your welfare. One cannot publication puts unemployment in the Soviet Union at 15 per cent, although it is unclear how the figures are calculated. Of my own friends and acquaintances in Eastern Europe, one puts salt on the streets for two hours every snowy morning in winter; two clean lavatories and stairways on one day a week; two are nightwatchmen where there is nothing to watch; most of the rest work as and when they can, in order to acquire a residence permit in a town. Almost all of them receive less than they would get if they were entitled to welfare.) We are repeatedly told that the dictatorship exerted by the Party is simply the dictatorship of the proletariat (or at least its "logical expression"), and informed, for example, that 99.9 per cent of Czechs in 1976 voted for the National Front candidates. (One wonders where the remaining 0.1 per cent now are. In fact virtually no Czech ever attends an election, since the Communist Party fills in your ballot form if you do not attend, and, if you do attend and choose to make use of the procedure for voting secretly - the *klosk* is ostentatiously there - you are, to put it mildly, a fool.)

Sometimes Wilczynski shows an awareness that the theory of communism has been criticized. His specialty seems to be economics, and he has great respect for the heroic

attempts by Eastern European economists, especially Poles, to provide the concepts with which the modern "socialist" economy can be described. At the same time he seems to admit that the labour theory of value (which he calls one of the four "cornerstones" of Marxism) is wrong. When it was seen that the labour theory does not explain price and profit (although it aimed to do so), early Marxists adopted what is now a familiar strategy: they argued that it does explain something called "value", that "value" is the "essence" of which price and profit are the "appearance", and that there remains only a "transformation problem": how to derive the illusions of the market-place from the realities which they conceal. This excruciating piece of intellectual dishonesty (what one might call "saving the essences") has led to a mass of Marxian economics in the Soviet Union, and garbled versions of it are presented by Wilczynski. A similar attempt has been made to "save the essences" in the theory of history, although Wilczynski seems to be less aware of its existence. It provides the unflying thread of dishonesty in Lukács, Goldmann and Althusser, and, in its late baroque excesses, invokes vertigo in the minds of those not independently persuaded that the Marxian theory of history must be true.

The four corner stones of Marxism are, apparently, the labour theory, the materialist theory of history, dialectical materialism and the class struggle. The remaining two are equally, if not more, contentious: as a Pole it is surely possible for Wilczynski to have observed how intensely dated and parochial is the concept of the "class struggle". For one thing, the notion of class with which it was associated (where class meant, roughly, position in production relations) no longer seems clearly to apply, or if it does apply, it is not so as to support a theory of "struggle". While there are indeed "struggles" in the world, they are not between "classes": the struggle in Poland involves a whole people, vainly trying to throw off the yoke imposed on it by an external power, in collaboration, it must be added, with the kind of people who speak the language recorded by Wilczynski. Outside the parlours of the student left, this talk of class struggle seems now to be no more than fantasy.

There is a useful moral to be drawn from Wilczynski's book. I assume that it really does record the main items of political thought that have been contributed by Marxian to political practice, if not to political theory. One begins to see just how disastrous that application has been. The dictionary consists almost entirely of shrill communism in the modern world.

Long division

Paul Arthur

MARTIN WALLACE

British Government in Northern
Ireland: From Devolution to Direct
Rule
192pp. David and Charles. £6.95.
0 7153 8153 9

FREDERICK W. BOAL and
J. NEVILLE H. DOUGLAS (Editors)

Integration and Division: Critical
Perspectives on the Northern Ireland
Problem
368pp. Academic Press. £19.80.
0 12 108080 3

By now Martin Wallace, whose fourth book on Irish matters this is, has a well-established formula - informative, but bland, low-key and tentative. He eschews the emotions and passions of the combatants for the "studied objectivity" of official inquiries. The result is that much of his book is taken up with the tedious, flattening prose of bureaucracy, with the space between the quotations being little more than the author's gloss on them. There is not one memorable sentence

in the whole book. Wallace also works on the assumption that Government plays the role of Solomon, yet a surveyor glance at, say, the Widgery Report on "Bloody Sunday" should persuade any observer that the Executive need not necessarily be dispassionate nor disinterested. Nor indeed need it have vision: it has taken twelve years of bloody conflict - some would say, settling their sights on the Battle of Baginbun, 812 years - for Dublin and London to establish a Study Group to "analyse the reasons for misconceptions in each country over attitudes and Government policies in the other".

Frederick W. Boal and J. Neville H. Douglas allude to this narrowness of vision in the collection they have edited: "This geographers' collective conducts its enquiry in terms of two alternative models: the conciliational and the 'double mystery'." The former purports to explain how deeply divided societies can learn to live in harmony, although Cyprus, Lebanon and Northern Ireland have highlighted its practical and theoretical drawbacks. The latter is more promising and reveals the political uncertainty and territorial ambiguity of the Northern Ireland problem. Surprisingly, most of the contributions here are more drawn to consociationalism and fail to take

slogans, abortive dogmas, absurd "heresies" and controversies, eg. the "one divides into two" versus "two combine into one" controversy, and pity the Chinaman who was on the wrong side. Events are described in mythopoetic language (the Great October Socialist Revolution, the Great Leap Forward, the Great Industrialization Drive, etc) without respect for historical truth, and every half-articulated perception of society takes the form of an "ism", of which one might be accused and for which (in the "heroic" stage) one might have been tried and executed. It is notable that there is not a single concept that belongs to law, that there is no reference to any institution (other than the Communist Party), and that the language of politics - the language which permits people to understand and resolve their conflicts - is swamped by hysterical gloss-shouting from the commanding heights.

If this dictionary is anything to go by, "actually existing socialism" has successfully abolished all the concepts and institutions, legal, political, social and moral, with which men have, over the centuries, attempted to understand their social condition; it has replaced the enterprise of political conciliation with a dogma of "struggle", and at the same time deprived opposition not only of its legal status, but equally of its right to describe the real complexities of human existence in a language of its own, without risking the charges of "bourgeois ideology", "deviationism", "opportunism" and the rest. It seems to assert that conciliation, adjudication, accommodation, in short, politics as we understand them - are no more than an appearance, beneath which the "essence" of the class struggle takes its inexorable course. But there is no such essence, and, even if there were, knowledge of it would no more be relevant to politics than knowledge of the skull is relevant to the interpretation of a face. The revolutionary overthrow of all existing institutions, all existing legality, all existing morality - this has indeed taken place. But no institutions, no legality, no morality, no human understanding seem to have come to replace it. The artefact of centuries was overturned in the name of a myth of "full communism", and, while we may take comfort in the fact that "Lenin defended the validity of objective truth" (he would have been hard pressed to attack it), it is undeniable that the inability of Communism to recognize that its theoretical foundations have been refuted shows a contempt for truth, and for human nature, that is without parallel in political history. Wilczynski's dictionary brings home vividly the almost complete intellectual, social, political, and above all moral isolation of

account of its historical, mechanistic and narrow base. Consequently most of them ignore the external dimension to the Northern Ireland question. Equally surprising, in a fleeting discussion of putative solutions, the editors touch on the blindingly obvious when they offer a "mutuality solution", that is, the withdrawal of the absolute sovereignties of the United Kingdom and the Republic, to be replaced by a Northern Ireland "with a considerable degree" of autonomy within the supportive framework of Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland. Dublin and London are now pursuing that process faithfully.

Both these studies will appeal to a limited readership. Wallace's may become required reading for those unfortunate posted to Northern Ireland for short tours of duty and who need a quick reference to the bewildering chronology of the past decade: Boal and Douglas will find their way into undergraduate courses, but students will need to be warned about its unevenness, because it reflects both the selectivism and the haphazard nature of geography as a discipline. It is unlikely that, as with the vast majority of books on Ulster, either of these two will outlive the present conflict.

Reviving the nation

Daniel Johnson

FRIEDRICH HEER

Der Kampf um die österreichische Identität
562pp. Vienna: Böhlau. DM 74.
3 205 07155 7

HERBERT SEIDLER

Österreichischer Völkisch und Geisteszeit

464pp. Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.
DM 70.
3 7001 04240

Traditionally Austria has venerated old men and children. It is brave of Friedrich Heer to draw attention to this fact, as Stefan Zweig did before him, since his own immense prestige (not, of course, his scholarly reputation, which rests upon such magisterial works as his *Aufgang Europas* of 1949 and his *Intellectual History of Europe* of 1953) owes something to his longevity. But this indomitable rebel has never cared a straw for prestige; he is worried that his enthusiasm for a republic only half his own age finds so few echoes among the young people who have known no other. In spite of his generous praise of books by youthful scholars like Alfred Pfabigan, the bitter truth is that Heer has no worthy heir. It is not surprising that the two final chapters of *Der Kampf um die österreichische Identität* (The Struggle for an Austrian Identity) — significantly entitled "Die Zerissenheit" (the mutilated) and "Die Einsamen" (the lonely) — should have fired Heer's imagination, and he promises to develop these themes in two further books, on Austrian writers from Grillparzer to the present, and on political thinkers of the First Austrian Republic.

Heer is torn between the desire not to add fuel to the seedy nostalgia for Franz Joseph's Vienna which is now rampant in Austria — his book *exposes* such myths — and the need to invest Austrian patriotism with historical substance and the traditions to which he has always subscribed; those of universality and cultural unity. This thankless task ensures his essential isolation: he is attempting to revive a nation by revealing that the excuses and consolations of the past were really accessories to the national humiliation. Besides being the history of German fear of, and contempt for Austria, *Der Kampf um die österreichische Identität* is an investigation of Austrian self-abnegation since the disintegration of the old baroque synthesis of art, scholarship and politics.

Heer begins at the end, with an anthology of opinions drawn from the debates which have been conducted since 1945 among Austrians about the hash that was made after 1918 and the provincialism brought about by the Holocaust, the Iron Curtain and — Heer would say — a selective memory which former Nazis and Greater Germany enthusiasts do nothing to discourage. An exhilarating tour of the sources which bear on the genesis of a distinctive Austrian consciousness follows, reminding us that in Austria at least to be a medievalist is the best possible qualification for writing modern history. Heer's narrative turns into a description of a struggle with Luther, and above all with Luther's inauguration of an anti-Catholic, "irrational", incomparably expressive language and the attempts to impose it, which reached a climax in the "deutschnationaler Sprachkampf" of the last century. The suppression of Austrian Protestantism provisionally during the Counter-Reformation and definitively under Maria Theresa, Heer considers to have been a catastrophe; to it he attributes the Austrian habit of "dismembering". The descendants of Hussites and Lutheran émigrés, such as Treitschke, became Austria's bitterest foes. The more subtle Jacob Burckhardt, on the other hand, could dismiss attacks on Austrian "chaos" as mere National Liberalism.

It is in the imperial extravagance of Fischer von Erlach's Schönbrunn (never built), in the inextricable

"openness" of Leibniz, in the humanism of the Benedictines as mirrored in Mozart that Heer sees the adequate expression of the Austrian ideal: its Spanish ceremonial — "Köses die Hand" only recently ceased to be a standard "lightness". The three misshapen figures of Leopold I, Prince Eugen and Leibniz — the two last, like so many great Austrians, baroque *Gastarbeiter* — raised Habsburg Vienna to its peak. But under Maria Theresa Austria bred the "narrow, one-dimensional, 'German type'" which was eventually to undermine the edifice; and the first of the country's three implacable enemies, Frederick the Great (the others being Bismarck and Hitler) stole Silesia and the economic future. Heer nevertheless pays tribute to the Emperor's stubbornness. His portrait of Frederick is masterly: the double-life, the self-hatred, the fear of Joseph II, expressed as scorn for the "Archsacristan". The Josephine enlightenment — a Bohemian movement wholly un-bohemian in character — reached new heights of sophistication, but also the narrowness and vulgarity attendant on any anti-cultural *Kulturkampf*. Heer perhaps goes too far in supposing that the disappearance of the *Hauswirt* (fool) from the Viennese theatre around 1770 represents the same loss of cheerfulness that, in the *Sturm und Drang* poets of Germany, gave rise to Nietzsche's crude association of enlightenment with pessimism. But he

is undoubtedly right to draw parallels between the generational conflicts in Germany at the beginning of the nineteenth century, which culminated in the Wars of Liberation against Napoleon, and a millenarian nationalism, and the similar tensions in the Habsburg empire at the turn of the present century, which produced assassins like Friedrich Adler and Gavril Princip, self-assassins like Crown Prince Rudolf and Otto Weininger, and nationalist youths like Adolf Hitler.

Metternich, as the last successful guardian of Austria before the German avalanche like the emperors Franz I/II and Ferdinand I, meets with Heer's approval; but the chaplain's famous censorship certainly did not insulate its romantic culture from "abyssal" and subversive visions like Lenau's *Faust* and Schubert's *Winterreise*. In his study of German influences on Austria before 1848, Herbert Seidler does not examine this culture as such, but limits himself to charting the response of scholars like Schreyvogel, Collin and Enk, and writers from Grillparzer to Stifter, to German literature, particularly to the Schlegels, Adam Müller and other Catholic romantics who settled in Vienna. Was Austrian pessimism a German import? Was Wilhelm von Schütz (on whom Goebbels wrote his thesis) alone in seeing Goethe's *Mein Kampf* as the spirit of Protestantism? The breadth of German influence is made clear in

Seidler's book, but only rarely its depth — as when he sees the source of the Austrian Goethe cult in the enduring memory of Leibniz, or finds "the typical Austrian openness to the realities of life" in the priest Bratunek's view of romanticism: "Just where irony seems perfectly sufficient, after having denied to reality all truth with infinite insolence, the flood of yearning bursts forth irresistibly too, and drives man restlessly towards peace and reconciliation with the outraged powers of life."

The Austrian reconciliation of opposites was certainly embodied in Friedrich Schlegel, who considered metaphysics a "science of experience", whose lectures attracted so many women that even Varnhagen (who was married to Berlin's greatest bluestocking, Rahel) raised an eyebrow, but who could also write in 1813: "It is indeed high time that this difference in literature [between Austria and Germany] should gradually cease entirely." That was the rub: Nestoy might still exploit the differences between the two countries in spoken German, but by his time the linguistic *Gleichschaltung* (coordination) was an accomplished fact; and the combination of popular discouragement with the authorities' failure to promote a "struggle of minds" (except perhaps in the harmless manner satirized by Musil), meant that a political dependence on Bismarck's volatile creation followed. Heer

depicts splendidly the depths of masochism to which Franz Joseph's régime resorted — the insulting of his heirs Rudolf and Franz Ferdinand, and of the Mayor of Vienna, Karl Lueger, the demagogic leader of the Catholic "Black-Yellow" opposition, and exploiter of a lower-middle-class brand of antisemitism which Heer traces back two centuries to Abraham a Sancta Clara. To young fanatics like Friedrich Adler, Lueger was a "juggler" and a stick with which to beat their easy-going Social Democratic fathers; but Hitler was more astute, took Lueger as his model and got Catholic politicians like Dollfuss and Schuschnigg to do most of his dirty work for him before 1938. Heer quotes the pitiable Schuschnigg — condemned to hard labour under the Nazis — rebuking himself many years later for having stopped short of totalitarianism.

Did a distinctive Austrian style survive all this? Or was the greatness of Kraus and Herzl, Mahler and Freud only made possible by the "monomaniac, monological existence" which Heer identifies with the German intellect? He leaves us with a mischievously ambiguous answer — his portrait of Joseph Roth: "Socialist, liberal, humanist, Jew, Catholic, Old Austrian." Self-exiled, "broken by the fate of his homeland" (Werfel), with the manners and transience of a guest, Roth's Parisian funeral in 1939 attracted both Habsburg and Communist mourners. Is Heer perhaps offering this as an ideal for imitation?

Forging the masses

David Crew

MARY NOLAN

Social Democracy and Society Working-class radicalism in Düsseldorf, 1890-1920

376pp. Cambridge University Press. £27.50.
0 521 23473 5

So much has been written about the Wilhelmine Social Democrats that any new book on the subject must offer not only new facts but a different way of looking at the party's history. Many Nolan attempts "to integrate the history of the working class with the history of the workers' movement, to use each to elucidate the other". This approach, she contends, permits us to break free from the type of narrow political history of the party that is ignorant of the social history of workers. At the same time, it avoids the pitfalls of social history that ignores politics, attempting to derive explanations of

political behaviour directly from the history of work, culture and community. In short, *Social Democracy and Society* is meant to be a new history not only of the party but of the relationship between it and the working class.

These are legitimate if extremely ambitious aims. Given the magnitude of the task, it is not surprising that the results are partial and uneven. Nolan is at her strongest in describing the political development of the Düsseldorf SPD. The local branch stood on the left wing of the party before the war. By 1917 the city was a stronghold of the USPD. The sources of this radical tradition in Düsseldorf and in the industrial west were, as a local party leader and former student of Rosa Luxemburg put it in 1909, "the economic and political pressures that bear down on the workers... Through them the masses are forged together and learn class consciousness and revolutionary thinking." According to Nolan, the sharpness of class divisions in this industrial town, the power and in-

transigence of large industrial employers, the intensity of political competition between socialists and the Catholic Centre party, combined with the restrictive Prussian suffrage and the weakness of the German Reichstag to make "reformism impossible".

The bureaucratization of the local party after the turn of the century did not produce the ossification and conservatism predicted by both Michels and Luxemburg. In Düsseldorf, as in many other Rhineland and Ruhr industrial towns with large Catholic populations, the Centre party retained a tenuous grip on the loyalties of many members of the working class. To breach the walls of the "Centre Fortress", local social democrats found that they needed a strong and efficient electoral machine. But the men and women who created this party apparatus were reduced neither into reformism nor passive centrism by their electoral victories because these successes produced few tangible rewards. Even after the great electoral advance of 1912, Düsseldorf's social democrats pursued an increasingly radical course because their experience repeatedly showed them "that they had not missed any opportunities to play reformist politics. There were none to miss." Düsseldorf's radicals remained sceptical of parliamentarism and advocated extra-parliamentary means, such as the mass strike, to achieve a radical political and social transformation.

But Nolan's explanations of radicalism and reformism are too deterministic. She argues that a south German style of reformism could gain no ground in Düsseldorf because "a minimum of progress would have been necessary to make reform plausible". This does not explain why radicalism triumphed. It would be difficult indeed to find communities in which less progress had been made by the industrial working class (apart from those in upper Silesia and the Saar) than the mining and steel towns of the eastern Ruhr, such as Bochum or Dortmund. Yet here radicalism met a cold reception in party councils. Moderate social democrats in Dortmund, who had recently unseated the radicals, did almost as well in the 1912 elections as their more left-wing comrades in Düsseldorf. Clearly, both party leaders and working-class voters in the eastern Ruhr had read the political implications of local and national conditions rather differently. The impossibility of reformism did

not alone provide sufficient cause for a turn to the left.

It is difficult to derive any firm conclusions about the nature of local working-class consciousness from *Social Democracy and Society*. The promised connection between the party and the working class is seldom adequately made. Frequently Nolan succumbs to the temptation to substitute the consciousness of the party militants for that of rank-and-file workers. When taken to an extreme this approach produces peculiar descriptions of the process of class formation. For example, she suggests that "in mediating between workers on the one hand and the state and society on the other, the Social Democrats not only created a powerful movement but a working class as well". Later we learn that the social democrats "had created a party and union movement, a workers' culture and most important, a cohesive working class" (my emphasis). But, as Nolan later admits, workers in Düsseldorf remained fragmented along lines of "occupation and skill, culture and religion, age and sex, birthplace and commitment to urban life and industrial work". If to a lesser degree than in the 1890s, more importantly, political loyalties continued to be divided among the Centre party, the Social Democrats and the KPD, while a sizeable number of workers were politically indifferent and uninvolved.

Luxemburg and the left believed that the German masses were innately radical and potentially revolutionary. The left had only to discover the proper means of realizing this potential. In 1914, a local socialist editor wrote: "What keeps the masses from us now is not a belief in capitalism but a disbelief in the proletarian cause. The masses do not doubt the justice of our demands... What our power to gain them... What we need is an energetic tactic in all areas." This vision of an organic, homogeneous mass radicalism was "fundamental to the left's understanding and justification of its own historical role. But rather than testing these assumptions by attempting to reconstruct working-class political experience in all its variety and complexity, Nolan is content simply to fault the party for its failure to discover the proper revolutionary strategy whereby this elemental radicalism could have been unleashed. This implies a myopic view of the German working class that historians of the social democratic movement cannot afford to share.

Evidence of discomfort

Frances Spalding

ROGER BERTHOUD

Graham Sutherland: A Biography
339pp. Faber. £12.50.
0 371 11882 8

On September 16, 1938, Graham Sutherland wrote to Paul Nash: "We are in Pembrokeshire, alternating between enjoyment of the superb country and desolation as we scan the horizon." Elation and foreboding converge in his Welsh landscapes. Though inspired by a particular area, they are imaginative constructions, tinged with Smallman: closer in mood to Birnam Wood than the Wales of Richard Wilson or J. D. Innes. Sutherland employed Samuel Palmer's spatial idiom to suggest, not benign fertility, but encompassing disquiet. He later recalled how the "exultant strangeness" of the landscape aroused in him "an emotional feeling of being on the brink of some drama." His discovery of Pembrokeshire had crystallized a style expressive of the historic moment.

"I did not feel that my imagination was in conflict with the real", Sutherland wrote of this period, "but that reality was a dispersed and integrated form of imagination." At the recent Tate retrospective — the largest and most comprehensive Sutherland exhibition ever mounted — imagination and reality progressively diverge as the artist's career unfolds. His super-real portraits become the counterpart to his nature paintings with their strange and fantastic permutations. In one of these, "The Ticker", painted two years before the artist's death in 1980, the small, monk-like figure hunched over his work is a self-portrait. Behind him gnarled trees and a flare into a stylized, tangled forest: the artist is ensnared in a world of his own imagination.

The recurrent expression of discomfort and anxiety in Sutherland's art confirms the sensation that he was trapped, that his imagination became a not to be heightened reality but to escape from it. Roger Berthoud's biography excellently documents the circumstances surrounding Sutherland's life and career. He began as an artist, perpetuating Palmeresque myths, but the collapse of the print market, following the Wall Street crash, obliged him to change his medium. He taught, designed occasional posters, tea-service patterns

and even a postage stamp (never used), and also began to paint. By the 1950s he had become adept at Picasso's method of paraphrasing appearances for emotional effect; his "Thorn" paintings chimed with a mood of post-war Angst. During this decade he also designed for Coventry cathedral the largest tapestry in the world and became renowned as a portrait painter. As the latter, his technique was to seize on a striking characteristic with a brutality which, after the initial affront has worn off, is subtly flattering. Meanwhile influential friends (notably Lord Clark and Sir Colin Anderson) and the Beaverbrook press kept his name in the public eye, transforming a rather private individual into a much vaunted celebrity.

The picture that emerges from Berthoud's book is of an over-sensitive, uncertain man, quick to cross with others. Sutherland fell foul of the owners of Picton Castle, who since 1976 have generously housed the Graham Sutherland Gallery in a disused wing, when they introduced a 50p car park charge. He angered his fellow trustees of the Tate by resigning from the board when the scandal over the gallery's maladministration in 1954 was at its height. This and subsequent chapters on the Churchill portrait and the Coventry commission make riveting, if painful, reading, as they detail the artist's manoeuvring and mismanagement of complicated situations.

Throughout Berthoud's perceptive summaries and asides, Sutherland's character remains elusive and contradictory. A love of nature is combined with a taste for fast cars; his most intensive bout of gambling coincides with his preparatory work for the Coventry tapestry; left-wing sympathies do not prevent him becoming a socialite among a rich and powerful elite.

Lady Churchill was surprised that one so charming could produce such cruel designs. Often his writhing forms, situated within an indeterminate space, form knots of interest that snare the eye. His darker emotions found more direct outlet when, as an official war artist during 1940-45, he was sent to record scenes of devastation, Cornish tin-mines, quarrying, open-cast mining, steelworks and, finally a damaged flying-bomb depot in northern France. At the Imperial War Museum until July 14, on loan from a private Italian collection, are 153 drawings that he made on the spot, in direct response to what he saw. They are scratchy, spontaneous, often notational; composed of trailing lines, rough textures,

fuliginous reds and ochres; concerned, as much with the atmospheric conditions, the grime and heat, as with the shapes of stopes or blast-furnaces. From these sketches he would afterwards make larger, more finished works.

Sutherland's main achievement, however, was his reinvention of the English landscape tradition. It was an achievement that he failed to sustain, as his late re-engagement with the Welsh landscape makes clear. In 1957 he returned to Pembrokeshire to assist with the making of a film on his work, and realized he had been "sadly mistaken" in thinking he had exhausted what the countryside had to offer. With his wife Kathleen, from whom he was rarely parted (a "cherished prisoner" Berthoud calls her, though her managerial role suggests the inverse), he paid regular visits to the area from then until his death. While his wife sat reading in the Jaguar, he sketched until he was exhausted, evidently trying to recapture his earlier vision. He reverted occasionally to his former motifs and compositional techniques: the winding lanes return and the paradoxical use of black to suggest light. In other of his late canvases complex structures are elaborated out of rusting chains, or tree roots; these draw us into an imagined world where there is little sense of discovery.

Sutherland's move to the South of France in the 1950s, as Berthoud surmises, was related to a desire to measure his art against European standards. Much of his painting produced immediately after the war shadows the work of Picasso. In the Tate exhibition Sutherland's personality was best caught in the final room, devoted to drawings and watercolours. He had little feeling for oils and on a large scale tended towards elegant rhetoric. But in these small studies, confined to the stabbing pen and thinning ink or wash, his vision is quick and charged with feeling. He excelled within the limitations of the English lyric tradition but swam less easily in the mainstream of European painting.

Rebels and Precursors: the revolutionary years of Australian art, by Richard Heese (324pp. Allen Lane £25. 0 7129 13622 2) deals with the work of Australian "rebel" artists of the 1930s and 1940s. The book looks at the development of individual artists such as Sidney Nolan, Albert Tucker, Arthur Boyd, Noel Bergner and Noel Counihan.

among the greatest geniuses of all time" and whose work, according to Chambers' *Encyclopaedia* of 1891, "divided the suffrages of the many between Martin and Turner". Martin was indeed a giant, if not of Turner's stature, but he was not an architectural perspectivist in the sense meant in this book. He never worked for architects; in imagination he was his own architect, but again not of designs intended to be built. Stamp insists, rather unfairly, in calling him "mad" Martin, an appellation that was employed in the last century by those who disliked his visionary paintings but surely not one to be revived today — unless, which is unlikely, Stamp is confusing him with his younger brother Jonathan who did suffer from fits of madness brought on by religious enthusiasm. (In 1829 he set fire to York Minster.)

Stamp introduces his chosen perspective drawings with a useful historical essay and annotates each one fully. In spite of the inconsistencies noted above *The Great Perspectivists* is a valuable survey of a Victorian minor art which met its decline not only through the employment of professional draughtsmen but in more recent times through the introduction of mechanical styles of drawing like the isometric and above all through the growing popularity of the architectural mode — a useful working tool in the architect's office but as a means of explaining an architect's intentions to the public a mischievously misleading toy.

The whole work is magnificently produced — the colour plates are amongst the best ever published of goldsmiths' work — and is altogether outstanding in every way. It is unlikely to be superseded, and no collector or student of German silver can possibly operate without having at least access to a copy.

This is clearly demonstrated in the present exhaustive and sumptuous study by Helmut Selling of the goldsmiths of one of the leading German centres of metalworking, Augsburg. The book is that rare thing, a major work of original scholarship, with full critical apparatus of references, bibliography and indexes, produced in a manner that one has come to associate only with coffee-table books of the better sort. It comprises three large volumes which cover the whole history of the Augsburg goldsmiths and their products from 1529, when important new craft regulations were promulgated in the city, down to 1869, the year in which the old system of guild and municipal control of the crafts was abolished by the Bavarian state.

The first volume opens with an account of the political, social and economic factors that led to Augsburg becoming a major centre for goldsmiths' work (as well as, of course, for other things) in the sixteenth century but it is mainly taken up with a detailed survey of the many different types of plate, both secular and religious, produced there, and a catalogue of the pieces illustrated in the thirty-two coloured plates in the same volume and the 1,099 half-tone plates that comprise Volume Two.

The remaining volume, which is probably the one that will be most welcomed by collectors, dealers and museum curators, deals in detail with the history of the control, organization and operation of the goldsmiths' craft in Augsburg and, above all, with the goldsmiths themselves. Fully referenced accounts of the careers and recorded work of well over 2,000 of them are given, with reproductions of such of their marks as are known, also of nearly 1,000 members of associated crafts and businesses, such as jewellers, seal-engravers and bullion-dealers; in addition, 356 variations of the well-known pine-cone mark used between 1529 and 1868 are reproduced. The information contained in these sections, it should be mentioned, is mostly written in German so simple that even someone ignorant of the language should be able to extract all he requires with the aid of a dictionary and a little practice.

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The pine-cone brand

C. Blair

HELMUT SELLING

Die Kunst der Augsburg Goldschmiede 1529-1869
3 volumes
1,401pp. Munich: Beck.

Continental goldsmiths' work has never been appreciated in this country to anything like the same extent as other Continental art-forms. Though a few notable collections of foreign silver have been brought together — including those in the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum — British silver-collectors have rarely been inclined to look beyond the work of native craftsmen, except perhaps to note that the Huguenots introduced French styles in the late seventeenth century. Their insularity has been encouraged by the scarcity (which still continues) of publications in English on foreign silver, and also by an understandable reluctance to venture beyond the safe and familiar haven of the English hall-marking system. This is to be regretted, because not only is much foreign goldsmiths' work of magnificent quality, but a full understanding of English silver designs is not possible without some

knowledge of the Continental sources that often influenced them so strongly. Influences in the reverse direction were slight, at least until the introduction of the Neo-Classical style in the 1760s, and little English plate surviving from before the end of the eighteenth century shows anything like the vitality, inventiveness and variety of design, or even (dare one say it?) the quality of workmanship, of the best products of the leading Continental goldsmiths.

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A detail from "Portrait of Dorelia, at Toulouse", circa 1903-4. This red chalk drawing, which has been acquired by the British Museum, is reproduced from the exhibition of Gwen John's work at the Anthony d'Offay Gallery of which details are given in the caption to the picture on page 735.

Buildings to come

J. M. Richards

GLAVIER STAMP

The Great Perspectivists

44pp. with 187 black-and-white illustrations and 23 in colour. Trefoil Books, in association with the Royal Institute of British Architects Drawings Collection, £11.95 (paperback, £5.95). 0 85294 003 6

The architectural perspective is a beautiful art form with dubious claims to aesthetic significance. At its best it can constitute a real work of art, but its ordinary use, as a means of conveying information, often results in a record of architectural details which is little more than a list of facts. Its main purpose is to show off the design of a building before it has been constructed, either by reproducing the drawing in a periodical, by including it among competition drawings, or by exhibiting it, especially at the Royal Academy's summer show, where perspective drawings have always occupied the greater part of the walls of the architecture room.

Glavier Stamp, who has collected into *The Great Perspectivists* 180 examples, mostly from the RIBA Drawings Collection, refers to a fourth purpose: that of "explaining" an architect's ideas to his client. Perspectivists are not used for this purpose, but I suspect that this was seldom the stage at which

most of those in *The Great Perspectivists* were prepared. When so elaborate a representation of a new building was drawn out and coloured the design had surely been finalized and accepted.

As to technique, one oddity is that these carefully set-up perspectives often bear a misleading relation to how the building will look when completed because of the unreal viewpoint chosen. To see the building as depicted one would in many instances have to be standing inside the building on the opposite side of the street; seldom does it show the oblique view that is all that can be seen of a street facade. Nor does the fixed viewpoint, using two vanishing points, create a natural effect. Moreover, there are certain conventions adopted by perspectivists which have little to do with achieving a work of art: the treatment for example of the human figure and of trees and the often over-dramatic lighting.

Stamp mainly deals with drawings produced between the beginning of the nineteenth century (perspective was little used before the late eighteenth century) and the 1930s. He includes some handsome Victorian drawings — the one period when perspectives were frequently also works of art, especially when they were by the hand of one of the great Victorian architects. Men like Cockerell, Waterhouse and Rickards were splendid draughtsmen and liked to prepare their own perspectives.

The decline seems to have begun when architects no longer took pride in being themselves skilful draughtsmen

or in employing assistants who were. Instead there arrived on the architectural scene the professional perspectivists who produced show drawings for one architect after another so that the summer exhibition at the Academy contained quantities of examples of his work, giving a sameness to all the buildings depicted, and notably in the case of Cyril Percy, the professional perspectivist most favoured in the early in this century, a vulgarity of style sadly lacking, the dignity and the richness of the great Victorian architect-draughtsmen, but depending instead on facile tricks of the perspectivist's trade.

One exception in the post-Victorian era was William Walcot, who was a distinguished water-colourist in his own right, though he too employed mannerisms to enhance the drama with which his subjects were portrayed. Walcot's work brings distinction to the section of the book dealing with recent times. Otherwise the section dealing with the latest nineteenth century has the finest drawings, although not all of these really qualify for inclusion. J. M. Gandy made some beautiful drawings for Sir John Soane, but Stamp has not been able to resist the temptation of including his most famous drawing, "The Tomb of Merlin", which is an imaginative fantasy never intended to be built.

Less justifiable still is his inclusion of some of the apocalyptic paintings containing architectural scenery by John Martin, the painter whom the *Magazine of Art* declared in 1833 to be

Knaves and Foolovites

Geoffrey A. Hosking

M. E. SALTUKOV-SHCHEDRIN
The History of a Town or, The Chronicle of Foolov
Translated and edited by Susan C. Brownberger

219pp. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Ardis.
\$16.50.
0 88233 610 X

Saltukov-Shchedrin is a puzzling figure. In the standard history of Russian literature, Mirsky, while conceding that Saltukov wrote one good realist novel (*The Golovinov Family*), otherwise dismisses him as an "eminent journalist" — one whose style, furthermore, was "deeply rooted in the bad journalism of the period". The period, the 60s and 70s of the last century, was replete with turgid political writing, so that Mirsky's comment seems pretty discouraging. But anyone coming from Mirsky to *The History of a Town* is in for a pleasant shock. Here we have tin soldiers coming to life and marching into battle. One of the town governors flies through the air. Another has a head made out of a musical box, programmed to repeat the words "I'll not put up with it" at all contingencies. And at the climax of one of the chapters the marshal of the nobility, enticed by the delectable odours coming from yet another of the town governors, cuts off the top of his skull and finds it to be stuffed with truffles, which he consumes with gusto. At times we seem to be closer to *Alice in Wonderland* than to *Anna Karenina*.

Perhaps appearances are deceptive, however. After all, this is a familiar enough paradox in Russian literature: the realist writer depicting a reality so extraordinary that from time to time he oversteps the boundary into fantasy — and thereby takes his reader with him. The most recent example of the genre is Alexander Zinoviev; and it is no accident that *The History of a Town* reminds one of his *Yawning Heights*. Foolov, the town of Saltukov's title, is a settlement of indefinite extent and population which, like Zinoviev's *Iskani*, serves as a microcosm of the Russian polity. It is inhabited by a people so quarrelsome, disordered and incompetent that they decide, in a moment of fatal Hobbesian insight, to invite a prince from outside to rule over them. Those versed in Russian history will recognize here an approximation to the Chronicle's account of the origins of the Russian state. The first of the governors enters Foolov with the words "I shall flug", and thereby sets the scene for a succession of grotesque authoritarian figures, under whom the Foolovites live in unthinking submission, punctuated very occasionally by no less unthinking rebellion.

Soviet scholarship, which is very punctilious in these matters, has expended much industry and ingenuity

in establishing precise parallels between the individual governors and the historical figures on whom they were modelled. Susan Brownberger has made good use of their labours to provide end-notes explaining the historical setting which a Russian reader would take for granted. The parallels are general and evocative rather than individual and direct. Wartkin, who introduces "enlightenment" (in the form of mustard and the bay leaf) with knout and cannon, recalls Catherine II, who tried to compel peasants to grow potatoes, but also Arakcheev, Alexander II's chief adviser, who devised military colonies where soldiers combined ploughing with ennobling a standing army to feed itself. Arakcheev is reintroduced later in the person of Gloom-Grumblev (Ugryum-Burcheev in Russian), the last of Foolov's governors, who represents the spogee of brutal and mindless authoritarianism. Obsessed with order, discipline and straight lines, he eliminates the muddle of classical Foolov by razing the city and erecting a new, more hygienic version on a bare plane unblemished by any kind of natural curve or protuberance. In straight rows of identical houses live uniformity in height and age. "There is neither past nor future," the chronicler reports, "and for that reason the

system of chronology is abolished. There are two holidays: the one in spring, immediately after the snow has melted, is called Stendfastness Day and serves as preparation for calamities lying ahead; the other, in fall, is called Powers-that-Be-Day, and is dedicated to the memory of calamities already experienced. These holidays are distinguished from workdays only by intensified marching drill."

The novel ends in a way which has caused much critical controversy, with a great storm approaching the town, and Gloom-Grumblev prophesying the coming of a ruler still more terrible than himself, before disappearing in a crack of thunder. The question has been: does this presage revolution or the accession of a yet more reactionary ruler? The controversy, in my view, misses the point, failing to discern where Saltukov has taken off into (generalized) symbolism as opposed to (particularized) allegory. Even Gloom-Grumblev is by no means simply Arakcheev. In fact he is both reactionary and revolutionary. He combines autocratic traits with democratic ones: he is a great destroyer and leveler. Overall, as Brownberger aptly remarks, the content and imagery of the final section make it clear that an apocalypse is intended, of more than political significance, a judgment on both rulers and population for the vicious

Luxuriating in misery

James Kirkup

JACQUES STEPHEN ALEXIS
Compteur Général Soleil
350pp. Paris: Gallimard. 32fr.
2 0702 8730 0

PIERRE CLITANDRE
Cathédrale du môle d'aout
205pp. Paris: Syros. 59fr.
2 9019 6861 9

Visitors to Haiti, and particularly those staying in hotels in the classier districts of Port-au-Prince, soon become familiar with the extraordinary profusion of naïve art that for the past decade or so has filled the streets, souvenir-shops and galleries. The "Sunday painters" responsible for it are largely self-taught, totally unacademic, and their works are a vivid expression of modern Haitian existence, in all its hectic colour, voodoo fervour, political violence and social disintegration. (A typical example of this native style is reproduced from a striking panorama by one of the best of these artists, Sandro Miglierini, on the cover of Pierre Clitandre's first, remarkable novel.)

What is not so evident to tourists, unless they are familiar with French or the highly expressive Haitian *patois*, is the great literary renaissance taking place today in Haiti, or more openly among exiles in Florida, New York and Paris. Gallimard recently published an outstanding example of the modern Haitian novel, which, though filled with native vigour and wit, is far from naïve: Jean Métellus's *Jaguar au Cadeau* (reviewed in the TLS on March 12). Now they have also re-issued the classic *Compteur Général Soleil*, first published in 1955. Like Métellus's novel, which describes a similar period in the 1930s, Alexis's book paints a broad and luxuriant fresco of life in Haiti, with its blacks, whites and all the colours in between. The anti-hero, Hilarion Hilarion (ironic name), is a wretched young black from Port-au-Prince, who is perpetually hungry. He steals from a white man's house, and is caught by police who torture and imprison him. But in prison he encounters a militant communist who teaches him how Americans have cruelly oppressed and exploited his people. When he leaves prison, Hilarion becomes a communist, marries the delightful Claire-Heureuse whom he meets on the beach, and starts a family. All seems to be going well for him at last,

but not for long; he is assassinated by fascist thugs.

The author, too, was assassinated in 1961 when he tried to invade Haiti with a small commando group in order to encourage resistance against Duvalier. Alexis, born in 1922, was a descendant of Jacques Ier, Dessalines, founder of Haitian independence. His father, a well-known journalist, novelist and diplomat, gave him a taste for writing, and Alexis was soon part of the fevered revolutionary and literary scene, making his debut with a fine essay on the Haitian poet Hamilton Garoute, and contributing to many short-lived literary reviews and the discussions of the various intellectual groups.

Indeed, he helped to found the group known as *La Rueuse* along with the great Haitian poet René Despeire. Before his untimely death, he composed a collection of essays, two more novels and a book of short stories.

Pierre Clitandre's *Cathédrale du môle d'aout* is written along the same lines, with passion and a mysteriously poetic yet dashing style. It is scattered with sharply evocative scenes and portraits, and with epigrammatic flashes of description that recall Flaubert's *Sorrow in Sunlight*. Yet underneath it all lies the ever-present, ever-growing tragedy of Haiti today. It is a sad tale of starving peasants uprooted from their native soil who come to the city to seek work in the *bidonvilles* or in the sugar-cane fields and factories. But in all this picturesque misery there is a sense of baroque extravagance, illuminated by his poetic speech, the wit, the proverb and the haunting street-cries and folk songs of a proud, artistic people living lives of surrealism and absurdity.

Clitandre, born in 1954, is a natural writer, with a fluent and luxuriant narrative style that races from page to page in pursuit of magnificent tropical imagery, lively dialogue, magical eccentricities and scenes of abominable torture and humiliation. One is not surprised to learn that he is also a painter and a revolutionary journalist. He started by contributing to the independent weekly *Le Petit-Samedi-Soleil*, and became its editor-in-chief in 1978. However, on November 28, 1980, a wave of savage repression struck the island's artists, writers and intellectuals, who were striving for freedom of expression in the face of totalitarian censorship. Clitandre was able to teach the US in December, 1980, where he now lives in New York in the company of fellow artists and political exiles.

The French dark wood

M. G. McCulloch

MAURICE FICKELSON
La Vie Intérieure
138pp. Paris: Gallimard. 58fr.

La Vie Intérieure, Maurice Fickelson's third novel, could be read as an allegory on Art. Our narrator finds himself, "au milieu du chemin de notre vie", in the modern French dark wood of a hotel-cum-strange complete with long corridors, from the heart of which emanates a choral chant and from which there appears to be no exit, physical or mental. All exits are blocked by the bulky but ultimately insubstantial Madame Mauve, who coaxes, charms and cajoles the recalcitrant. Madame Mauve's principal occupation is redesigning the interior of the brothel; the narrator's fashioning a character which will allow him to live in the world of Madame Mauve's confection. Despite his efforts he remains prey to "la fluctuation insatiable qui subsiste, ici, en dépit de nos associations répétées, entre une l'ou ne connaisse déjà, une inquiétude constitutive en quelque sorte, oui, rémanence inerte, comme l'appendice mais moins facile à retrancher".

This dissatisfaction is initially provoked by the sight of a portrait to which the protagonist, Ludovic, is drawn by the attention another client pays it. It is further excited by Ludovic's meeting with a blind young woman, Lucy, whose resemblance to the portrait's model and, perhaps, to someone from his past, astonishes and disturbs him. His interest in the choir which eventually becomes an obsession — stems from his belief that Lucy is a member. Ludovic finally penetrates into the inner circle of this earthly Paradise, joining the select few at one of Madame Mauve's soirées, but he does not see the choir's leader, he uncovers his love. Instead he uncovers a cloth, not the motive force of this small universe, but the emptiness at the heart of all things.

Strange indeed is the world which Ludovic tries to inhabit. Stranger still is the way in which we are drawn after him as he scurries from assignment to assignment through the ever-changing warren of rooms and corridors, attempting to understand the topography of a place in which normal spatial relations do not always obtain, and in which it is an indelicacy to pursue causal relations. The effect is the way in which we are drawn after him as he scurries from assignment to assignment through the ever-changing warren of rooms and corridors, attempting to understand the topography of a place in which normal spatial relations do not always obtain, and in which it is an indelicacy to pursue causal relations. 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